Commentary

Volume Fifty-seven, Number One, January 1974

Watergate & the Legal Order

Alexander M. Bickel

Is Israel Losing Popular Support?/Earl Raab

Prisoners of War/Joan Colebrook

Family Reunion/Leslie H. Farber

The World of I. L. Peretz
Irving Howe & Eliezer Greenberg

That Old-Time Religion/James Hitchcock

Theater: O'Neill Reconsidered/Jack Richardson

Movies: Season's End/William S. Pechter

Books in Review: Rudolf Klein/B. H. Haggin/Marc F. Plattner
Leon Wieseltier/Marshall Sklare/Edward Grossman

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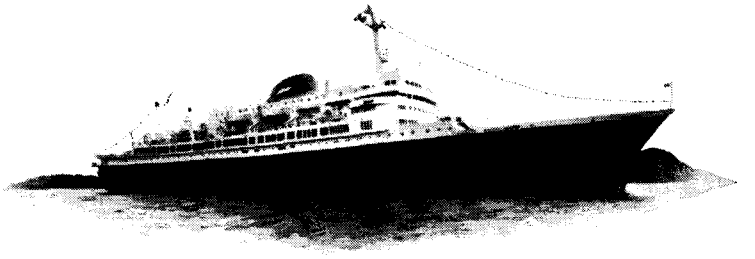

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Commentary

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COMMENTARY is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $1.25; $12 a year; 3 years $32; 5 years $48—Add $2.00 per year for Canada and Latin America; $3.00 for other foreign—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

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Indexed in *Readers' Guide, Book Review Digest, Public Affairs Information Service, Index to Jewish Periodicals, ABC Pol Sci, Historical Abstracts,* and *America: History and Life*—Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.
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Letters from Readers

The State of the Novel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Alfred Kazin's *Bright Book of Life: American Novelists and Storytellers from Hemingway to Mailer* deserves a closer reading than it has so far received. Jack Richardson ["The Working Critic," November 1973] well describes Kazin's style of "appearing . . . light and easy," but he tends to take the appearance for the reality. Mr. Richardson strives for a similar ease in his own writing, he tells us, yet he has delivered an admittedly "brutal" judgment in his review of this book. The reasons for his dislike, and for the book's surprising critical neglect in general, tell something, as they used to say, about the state of the culture.

Contrary to Mr. Richardson's impression, *Bright Book of Life* is not a loose chronicle but a book with a thesis. It argues that the American novel since the war has mirrored the decline of society into what is now a universal condition of despair. Just why Kazin has seen fit to couch his thesis in deceptively "easy" prose is a matter for speculation. My guess is that he found himself rather surprised by the drift of his argument toward a pessimistic conclusion, then chose to let it stand rather then attenuate it with speculation. The result is that his strictures at first appear, as they did to Mr. Richardson, as mere "slaps on the wrist."

Following his description of the loss of faith by Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Dos Passos, and Cummings, cited as a critical commonplace by Mr. Richardson, Kazin takes up the same theme in the novels of their inheritors. Here his critique of the older generation's modernism begins to lead to his conclusion. For he interprets the perpetuation of formal concerns by the postwar writers as also no more than bourgeois in inspiration. In surveying their work Kazin continues the method which Mr. Richardson defines but believes him to have abandoned: a "pierc[ing] through the often willful camouflage of the contemporary novelist . . . to uncover his particular concern." That concern turns out to be the novelist himself.

Kazin enforces this conclusion with writer after writer. Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer* is "the expression of some deep inner struggle." Kurt Vonnegut writes out of a personal "bitterness at the souring of so many American hopes." John O'Hara's "personal excitement" is the only thing that makes interesting a society in which "the social soil is too thin to hold anything of people but their ambition." In John Cheever's stories about the prosperous, everyone is "disappointed . . . there is no mastery . . . except Cheever's." It is the same with J. D. Salinger's characters, who are important only to him, with John Updike's "omnipresence," Saul Bellow's "personal epic," and Bernard Malamud's speech lurking in the voice of each of his characters. Philip Roth's novels asserted "that *he* was free," in Joan Didion's "you feel for *her*," and in Susan Sontag's the writer is "more interesting than her characters." Norman Mailer, Truman Capote, and the other "nonfiction" novelists exhibit the same tendency.

Kazin administers more than slaps on the wrist over this self-centeredness. He calls Salinger an "absolutist of feeling," accuses Bellow of "moral haughtiness" for loving nothing but his own opinions, and Capote of attempting to spread his own, obsessive "negative eros" over all his subjects. Kazin especially resents the nonfiction novelists for aggrandizing themselves by easy denunciations of society. Where with Updike he finds a disappointing absence of struggle with society, with Capote he charges that *In Cold Blood* has the effect of relieving the liberal imagination of responsibility for society. In general, the nonfiction novel exists "in order *not* to change the American situation that makes possible so much literary aggression against it."

But it is in "The Absurd as a Contemporary Style," the chapter that Richardson finds little more than a convenient *omnium gatherum*, that Kazin exposes the bourgeois spirit implicit in all this. "'Meaninglessness,'" he states, contemptuously putting the word in quotes, "is a middle-class state of mind." Novelists satirize the language of the Pentagon and the advertising agencies while reducing life to formulas with similar results. They strip down not the

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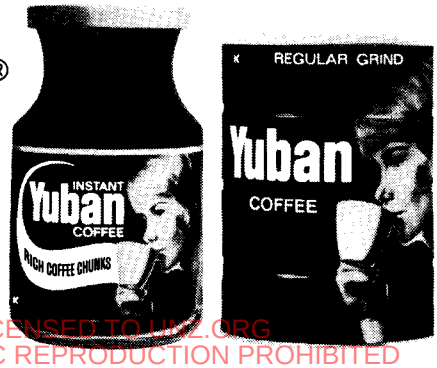

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world but the novel to the absurd. The Europeans "who invented the term" had a quarrel with existence. But the Americans "have merely realized the limitations of their own power."

Given this indictment, so savage when it is summarized, why has Kazin chosen the title, *Bright Book of Life*? And how has he managed to leave Jack Richardson, a perceptive critic, with an impression of flaccidity and "inconsequence"? Richard Poirier has recognized Kazin's attitude, if not his tone. In his review Poirier complains of "sputtering putdowns of Norman Mailer, Kurt Vonnegut, . . . Joseph Heller, and William Burroughs." Mr. Richardson's own observations about Kazin's deceptively easy style and unwillingness to get bogged down in tendentious theorizing apparently account for some of his own difficulty with the book. Add to this the paradox of Kazin's blaming novelists for failing to confront American society but not blaming them for their own imaginative failings.

> The trouble with society, as the end of the century approached, was obviously society itself. With the loss of the old bourgeois confidence came an expectation on every hand of dissolution. No one felt this so keenly as the novelist, who had depended so long on a social furniture that, as the century's accelerating wars showed, could be carted off in one of those quick changes of scene that have led us to think of contemporary history as macabre entertainment.

The trouble with the novel, in other words, may be traced to the decline of our culture.

The novel has been a middle-class art form—another commonplace of the sort Mr. Richardson deplores, but necessary to state nonetheless. Postwar American society has experienced the breakup of middle-class society, Kazin believes. The resultant "pervasive social anxiety" is reflected in the novel but, with few exceptions, not imaginatively seized upon by it. Thus, Mary McCarthy is right that nature is dead but she is not able to render the evidence in *Birds of America*. There is much brilliance, mad humor, and invention abroad, but, with the exception of Nabokov, no one is able to succeed on a large scale. The novel remains the bright book of life, but few are writing it.

Personally, I would have preferred a more explicit statement of this thesis. Richard Poirier contends that it amounts to an attack on the greatest writers of the age *in timid dismay at their masculine* toughness and out of a politically conservative fear of their anti-establishment rage. Jack Richardson, on the other hand, laments the absence of "a passionate bias." That neither is concerned with Kazin's theme of social decline supports my own belief that the novel has suddenly stopped seeming important in the same way that, a few years ago, the explication of poetry stopped seeming important. As for the state of the culture, that forgotten problem seems to be discussed only at the back of the New York *Times Book Review* and in the boardrooms of foundations. But whatever our trouble may be, somewhere between the views of Poirier and Mr. Richardson there should be room for a serious discussion of *Bright Book of Life*.

PETER SHAW
New York City

JACK RICHARDSON writes:

It is difficult to reply to Peter Shaw's sweeping analysis of my article, the state of the novel, and the decline of culture. He seems more concerned with unburdening himself of dark generalities about social and artistic decline than in dealing with Kazin's book, which if it is based upon such a hysterical and worn-out slogan as "the American novel . . . has mirrored the decline of society into what is now a universal condition of despair" is even a sorrier performance than I took it for. Better no critical idea at all than one that says no more than that novelists are affected by the world they live in.

Our culture may or may not be in decline; the novel may or may not be moribund: argument about such statements is a barren enterprise. What is fruitful is the sort of criticism to which *Bright Book of Life* aspired and which it failed to produce, namely, an original view of the artistic manner of a particular time and a judgment of that manner which is enforced by analysis that goes beyond mere summarizing of disconnected attitudes toward the world.

Mr. Shaw will no doubt find in this definition of criticism an inordinate aversion to those critical commonplaces he thinks need stat-

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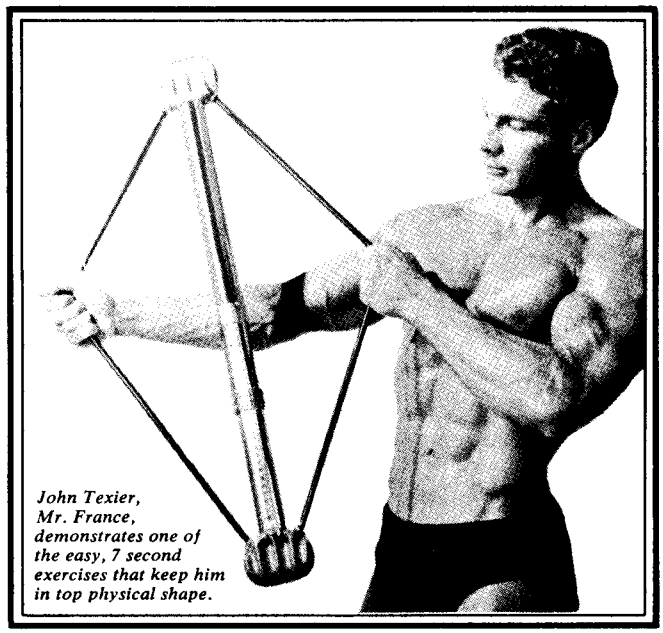

John Texier, Mr. France, demonstrates one of the easy, 7 second exercises that keep him in top physical shape.

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Q. *How does lack of fitness show up?*

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Q. *How long does it take?*

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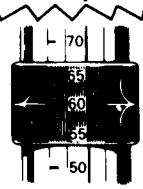

Q. *But it's hard work, isn't it?*

A. Not at all. The whole point of Isometrics is that by "exercising" for only 7 seconds at a time, you avoid the excess muscle strain and fatigue of "crash" training programs which often do more harm than good. Bullworker training is gauged to each user's personal potential.

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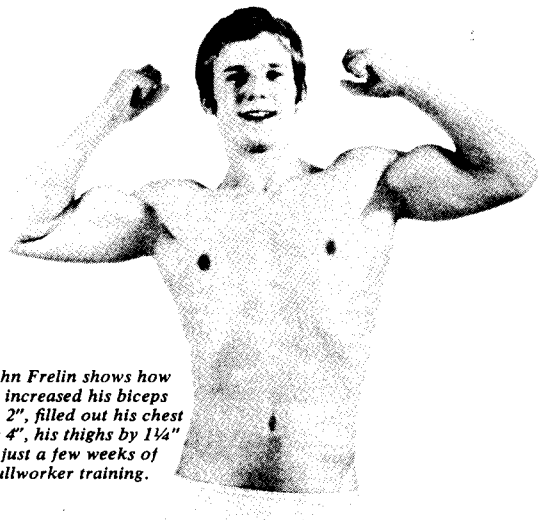

John Frelin shows how he increased his biceps by 2", filled out his chest by 4", his thighs by 1¼" in just a few weeks of Bullworker training.

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ing. However, it was this sort of criticism I expected from Alfred Kazin, and my article simply registered the reasons for my disappointment.

Egalitarianism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Just when I think that the last word has been written about social policy, COMMENTARY presents another viewpoint for my enlightenment.

Charles Frankel's analysis of John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* ["The New Egalitarianism and the Old," September 1973] opened up for me an avenue of thinking about equality and inequality at a time when I thought the "well" had run dry. In addition, Mr. Frankel's article improved my perspective on John Rawls's contribution to the social sciences. Now I can appreciate Rawls for his expert and finite analysis of the "theory" of justice, which over the past decade seems to have dominated social policy . . . and which promises to dilute individual initiative and inspiration.

MARTHA CHERKIS
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Like Charles Frankel, I myself am impatient with metaphysical egalitarianism. If there were social justice, authentic values, and meaningful work, I would not . . . give a hang who had more or less. . . . But in the present order of things that is not exactly the case. . . .

First, some people still have much greater access to the opportunity ladder than others. Even the old liberal battles that Mr. Frankel claims to support have been won largely on paper and not in substance. In his article, in fact, he implicitly acknowledges this situation, although he is not noticeably agitated or indignant about it.

Second, a number of things which are amply rewarded economically, like working for an advertising agency to contrive the best method for selling a particular brand of toothpaste, have little to do with good character or worthy initiative. But I question Mr. Frankel's assumption that if they did it would probably make sense to reward them with special generosity in order to provide sufficient motivation for creative and responsible endeavor. To me this is embarrassingly obtuse psychology. People are most responsible in their attitude toward society when it inspires natural affection and loyalty: creativity . . . flows from a spontaneous and complex interaction between the organism and its environment. Indeed, the widespread inhibition of such a relationship is what renders much present activity in the world so sterile and mediocre.

There are also our totally arbitrary and inexplicable cultural values regarding what is defined as significant. Offhand, for example, I do not see why a medical doctor should be more highly paid than a mailman. I must point out that my emphasis here is not primarily on income differentials but on the absurd connection we make in this society between the amount of money a man earns and the degree of respect and influence he can secure. . . .

Finally, I happen to believe that habitually attributing either emotional, moral, or intellectual superiority to given individuals reflects a pathetically superficial understanding of the human personality. Admittedly there are vast ranges of difference among people in terms of interest, temperament, and skill. But nonetheless most of us are, in essence, remarkably gifted, eager, and competent. We ought in this context to observe the astonishing curiosity and liveliness of the growing child which are so often tragically stifled at an early age. Therefore, the problem we face now is not sentimentality about human limitations but rather the deranged and pervasive mode of social engineering which constricts the vital energy and imagination of almost everyone. . . .

ARNOLD SACHAR
Forest Hills, New York

CHARLES FRANKEL writes:

I am naturally pleased to have Martha Cherkis's kind words. A bit ungratefully, I would enter a mild dissent: I do not think that the "new egalitarianism" which I criticized has dominated social policy over the last decade. It represents a kind of thinking principally confined to literary-academic-educationist groups whose influence on fashions in thought is considerable, but whose influence on social policy still meets with substantial competition. I don't think, either, that the "new egalitarianism" is responsible in any major way for the dilution of individual initiative. Insofar as such dilution has taken place, I am inclined to think that it is a product of long-term social changes, primarily in the family, the corporate world, and the conditions of labor and consumption, which have made the exercise of individual initiative more difficult and disreputable. The "new egalitarianism," on the whole, seems to me more a consequence than a cause of those changes. Which is not to say, of course, that it has no independent importance of its own. Ideas control our responses to events, limiting or opening up the choices, turning us insensible or in reckless directions, etc. So the "new egalitarianism" can have considerable, and I think unfortunate, consequences for our futures.

This brings me to Arnold Sachar's remarks, with which, though I respond to their high-mindedness, I have some trouble dealing. In part this is because he imputes a number of ideas and feelings to me which I don't have; in part it is because I hesitate to impute to him ideas which his words suggest *he* holds. I won't go over the list; just an example on each side. Readers of books or other essays of mine—indeed other readers of the essay on which Mr. Sachar comments—will know that I am by no means satisfied that we have reached the limits of the possible so far as equality of opportunity is concerned. As for my failure to seem "noticeably agitated" about this state of affairs—well, I can only say that I was writing an essay on a different subject, and that "noticeable agitation" is something which, in any case, I try to avoid when writing a philosophical essay.

Conversely, I find it difficult to believe that Mr. Sachar isn't pulling my leg when he pleads stunned astonishment that a doctor should be more highly paid than a mailman. It puts one in the embarrassed position of telling Mr. Sachar what of course he knows: doctors' skills are rarer, their hours on the job usually longer, the human needs they serve more urgent, the amount of training they have invested in their occupation much greater, and their professional worries more onerous. Perhaps Mr. Sachar is right, and despite all this they don't deserve more money than mailmen or even more gratitude from society. But surely he must simply have misspoken when he describes doctors' advantages as "totally arbitrary and inexplicable." I will wager, too, that, even at the risk of exhibiting "a pathetically super-

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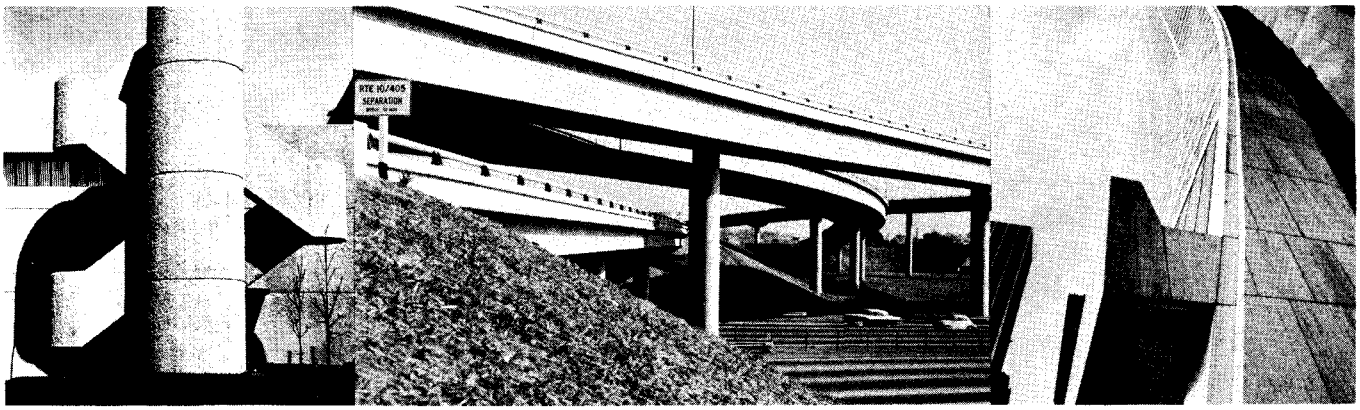

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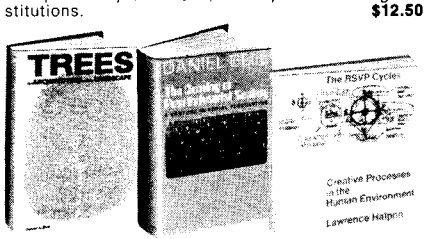

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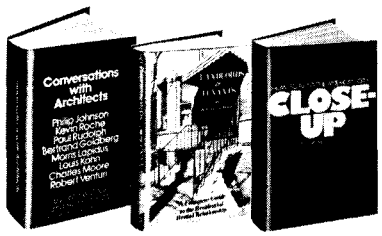

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ficial understanding of the human personality," he habitually and helplessly thinks Einstein intellectually superior to Liberace, and Martin Luther King morally superior to the Boston Strangler.

On the assumption that Mr. Sachar doesn't mean what his strong words suggest, I interpret him to be saying that all distinctions of better and worse are based on specific standards; that these standards, being limited, do not admit of any complete and final classification of people as superior; and that, furthermore, there are often legitimate disagreements about the right standards to employ. I agree. A certain ironic reserve is appropriate with regard to all free-swinging, unspecified classifications of people into higher and lower types. I also agree that it is good educational and social policy to proceed on the assumption that people have potentialities beyond what shows to the indifferent eye or the too eagerly categorizing mind.

Mr. Sachar makes a valuable point. But nothing in it need imply that all distinctions among individuals are hollow, or that the admiration and rewarding of excellences in achievement or character are morally arbitrary. Even in our much less than perfect world may we not go on making distinctions of better and worse? That seems to be a necessity for every vital creature. By washing out all standards in a bath of universal "creativity" we can all be saved from judgment, and that is, undeniably, a form of redemption. But it won't save us from the wasteful, the meretricious, or the poisonous, which will go right on doing their work, even if we lack the standards to recognize them.

On Jealousy

To the Editor of Commentary:

Leslie H. Farber's "On Jealousy" [October 1973] . . . eloquently describes human suffering caused by the "obsession" of jealousy. It is a passion which can indeed destroy our hope and trust in . . . life. Why? Because whether through temptation, suspicion, or the fact of sexual infidelity, man or woman is driven out of the paradise of "being in love," with its promise of everlasting unity, and its guarantee against alienation, separation, and loneliness. No denial of deep-seated longing for this paradise—either through the trivialization of erotic union in promiscuity, open marriage, wife-swapping, or the like—. . . can abolish the suffering of obsessional jealousy. The ideal of voluntary devotion of the partners, the marital commitment, has become a duty, a prison, from which one partner tries to escape. . . .

Both partners, whether guilty or raging in moral indignation, suffer from a disillusionment which indicates that the precarious balance between closeness and distance—respect for the freedom of both partners and voluntary mutual dedication—is a lost paradise, a lost ideal. But the lost paradise can sometimes at least partially be regained and result in deeper understanding. This comes with the recognition that both partners have contributed to the alienation—the one who violated the commitment as well as the one who feels violated—and such understanding may result in a genuine experience of forgiving.

(Dr.) Edith Weigert
Chevy Chase, Maryland

Plato, Marx & Kaufmann

To the Editor of Commentary:

Werner J. Dannhauser's review of Walter Kaufmann's *Without Guilt or Justice* [Books in Review, September 1973] represents the worst disservice imaginable to anyone interested in philosophy in the broadest sense. No one expects a critic to be totally free of personal bias, but Mr. Dannhauser's superficiality ill conceals his intent: to kill *ab initio* any interest in what promises to become a genuine classic in the humanities.

Perhaps it is symptomatic of the present state of philosophy in America that Commentary assigned the review of Kaufmann's book to someone who has no status as an academic philosopher. After the great age of American philosophy from Emerson to Dewey, the erstwhile "queen of the sciences" has now been totally captured by Carnap and others, the champions of the analytical school, according to which philosophy . . . "has no right to deal with anything but itself." . . . Far be it from me to run down a school which has undisputed merits, but I do strongly object to its megalomaniac claim to be the *only* philosophy. . . . This *Ungeist* drove away . . . Abraham Kaplan, the University of California's towering mind who challenged his narrow-minded colleagues with

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the irrefutable statement: "Philosophy is culture become self-conscious." . . .

Since Kaplan's departure for Israel, Walter Kaufmann remains one of the few, and in my opinion by far the greatest, of those who stand for a vital, viable philosophy. . . . All his works have lived up to the demand stipulated by Kaplan; in *Without Guilt or Justice* Kaufmann calls his philosophy a "depth philosophy . . . that inquires into the concrete human realities behind various philosophical positions." That he—successfully—tries to do away with "guilt feelings," a relic from man's archaic past, and replaces them with an "intellectual conscience," will not only meet with the approval of all humanistic psychologists (with the possible exception of Mowrer), but even of all those who, like myself, look at themselves as religious anthropologists. . . . It is interesting to notice how much in Kaufmann's system—whether known to him or not—rejuvenates classic Jewish ideas. . . .

My only personal regret is that Kaufmann, in his discussion of what he calls Manicheanism, the spirit that sees everything in black or white, seems unfamiliar with my . . . analysis of the Talmudic *yetzer ha-ra,* always translated as "evil impulse" and . . . the opposite of the "good impulse," whereas, according to the Rabbis of about the year 100 C.E., the latter is but the molded, trained expression of the former. This clearly anticipates Kaufmann's distinction between "untutored emotion and cultivated emotion." (As for my own findings, see "1,800 Years Before Freud," in *Judaism,* 1971; my book, *Hebrew Humanism,* 1965; and, more recently, "*Die rabbinische Reaktion auf des Paulus Grundgedanken,*" in *Emuna,* Cologne, 1972.)

Mr. Dannhauser severely takes Kaufmann to task for attacking not only Marcuse, Reich, and Rawls but for taking issue with Plato and—what heresy—with Marx. As for Marx, what makes him more infallible than Moses or Jesus, both of whom modern religion dares to approach critically? I am inclined to agree with . . . H.-J. Schoeps: "If only his [Marx's] brother-in-law, the secretary of the interior . . . F. W. Von Westphalen, had gotten him a chair of political economy at one of the Prussian universities, the world would have been spared much." . . .

As for Plato, anyone who has ever studied him seriously knows how often the brilliant Athenian changed his views—on the role of women, the permissibility or criminality of pederasty, and many other subjects. He himself stated: "Philosophizing rather than philosophy." In other words, Plato would have been the last person to swear by *any* system, including his own. Hence Kaufmann's critical approach to Plato is totally warranted.

Where does Kaufmann fall victim to the assumption that "he is the equal (at least) of even the greatest philosophers"? Can Mr. Dannhauser cite page and passage to prove such a monstrous assertion? Yet I maintain that Kaufmann is one of the most eminent thinkers of our age. I see in him the leading philosopher of modern America. What gives me the right to such a sweeping statement? Not my forty years in the rabbinate, although I was a close disciple of Leo Baeck who opened my eyes to what was towering in German philosophy. But as the holder of a Ph.D. from the University of Berlin when it was still the equal of Oxford and Cambridge, Harvard and Yale . . . and as a former lecturer in humanities at Stanford, the University of California, and other schools, I think I have the necessary credentials for taking the liberty to add my views to the discussion. . . .

(Rabbi) Harris H. Hirschberg
Northridge, California

Werner J. Dannhauser writes:

I scarcely know what to say. In my innocence, I thought that an eminent rabbi would object to a book providing a new morality, since the old morality came by way of Mount Sinai from a source more exalted than Walter Kaufmann; but I see I was wrong. Be that as it may, I am reluctant to argue with a man of the cloth, so I will try to be brief.

1) I am not a prisoner of "Carnap and others"; some of my best enemies belong to the analytical school.

2) I did not take Kaufmann to task for attacking Marcuse, Reich, and Rawls. I tried to take him to task for attacking Marx unfairly. I learned about fairness in Sunday school. I have never been accused of being a partisan of Marx and I thank Rabbi Hirschberg for that compliment.

3) I did study Plato once, and the only reason I didn't do it seriously is because I am frivolous. I don't know how often the brilliant Athenian changed his views. Was it twice? Ten times?

4) About citing page and passage for my assertion that Kaufmann seems to assume "he is the equal (at least) of even the greatest philosophers": I suggest Rabbi Hirschberg reread the passages of the book dealing with Plato, Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche. He can find them by consulting the index, which begins on page 265.

5) I am painfully aware of the fact that I have no status as an academic philosopher and am unable to rival Rabbi Hirschberg in distinction. I am a graduate of Miles Standish Elementary School of Cleveland, Ohio, and of some other educational institutions; I will not mention them for fear of destroying them. I know I'm only a little chimney, but I'm studying very hard to be a smokestack.

Prisons and Attica

To the Editor of Commentary:

Roger Starr [Letters from Readers, September 1973, in a discussion of Mr. Starr's article, "Prisons, Politics & the Attica Report," March 1973] asks whether I didn't "abandon . . . any real hope of achieving the peace at [Attica]. . . ." Of course I did, and I did so partly because of the obvious insistence by the prisoners on what seemed to be unachievable conditions. That insistence, however, was based on their bitter experience with the New York State prison administration at Auburn in 1970 and their knowledge of many other prison uprisings, where no-reprisal pledges were subsequently dishonored, brutally and deliberately. Thus, the prisoners' "intransigence" had a very sound basis.

More important, I think the main problem with Mr. Starr's article, and the fundamental point in my reaction to it, is that it deprecates the systemic and structural diseases of our prison system and the role they played in causing the uprising and concentrates instead on those immediately involved in the uprising.

To put it slightly differently, the article advances a conspiracy-theory explanation for an event that exploded more or less inevitably from a bankrupt institution. (Interestingly enough, in "An Appointment With Watergate" in

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the same issue of COMMENTARY, Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab analyze this same kind of conspiratorial thinking and regard it as a fundamental shortcoming of our attitude toward Watergate.) It is for this reason that it is really not very important whether this particular uprising was planned or not. Even if there were such plans —and I neither know nor care whether there were—the important thing is why such "plans" were so tragically successful. And here we must look to more basic factors, which is what the McKay Commission did.

Let me add a few final points.

It is interesting, in light of Mr. Starr's claim that the uprising was dominated by an ideology which held that the prisoners were not really criminals, that the only amnesty they sought was for the uprising, not for the underlying offense that labeled them criminals in the first place. I don't deny the existence of the ideology, but the fact I have just cited does raise doubts about the importance of the "political-criminal" element.

I would have thought it rather obvious that my lack of comment on many of the points raised in the article did not constitute a lack of difference between Mr. Starr and myself on these questions, but only a lack of space and time. This is particularly true about the details of the Report itself, since I thought it more important to respond to Mr. Starr's judgments on the underlying causes of the events.

Finally, as to the "once wronged, then forever right" fallacy, I can't help feeling that the article really reflects an attitude of "once wrong, never right."

HERMAN SCHWARTZ
Faculty of Law and Jurisprudence
SUNY
Buffalo, New York

ROGER STARR writes:

It seems clearly futile to continue with Herman Schwartz a discussion of the inadequacies of the McKay Commission Report on the Attica prison riot. I should like to turn to the much more important question raised by Mr. Schwartz in his allegation that our prison system suffers from "systemic and structural diseases" and that it is "bankrupt."

Obviously, the word "bankrupt" is intended as a figure of speech. If Mr. Schwartz means that serving a term in a penal institution does not improve the character of every inmate, and that many ex-convicts regress to the commission of many crimes after their release, he has uttered what is already universal knowledge.

Prisons don't reform; but though this is disappointing, it does not change the fact that no other system of dealing with transgressors successfully reforms them either. I can find no evidence in the literature with which I am familiar to justify the belief that convicted offenders who are sentenced to a maximum-security institution of New York State, like Attica, would commit fewer subsequent crimes if they were placed on probation instead, or if they were given the most complete psychological work-up-*cum*-treatment known to the professions, or if they were sent to special institutions of trade or higher learning, or if indeed they were handled in any other way. At least, in Attica, they are in a position where it is difficult, though not impossible, for them to commit bodily injury on one another and even more difficult, during the period of their incarceration, to commit further criminal acts against the public in general. Since I regard these two latter aims as important criteria by which a criminal-justice system must be appraised, I cannot concur in Mr. Schwartz's finding of "bankruptcy."

I would also say that however imperfect may be the actual workings of any institutional system—whether we talk of prisons, hospitals, universities, or armies—the sentencing of offenders to incarceration for a term of years does satisfy a certain urge for justice on the part of the people taken as a political body. There is large room for argument about the actual deterrent value of punishment, but one would abolish the prison system only at the risk of serious damage to the sense of justice which a population holds in common.

I don't think the readers of COMMENTARY need a summary of the tragedies of incarceration—sexual deprivation, the deadening routine, the lack of significant work programs, and perhaps worst of all, as noted by Gresham Sykes, the forced association with other lawbreakers. I would be delighted to hear from Mr. Schwartz—or anyone

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else who speaks about the bankruptcy of this prison system—some sensible prescription for replacing it with another which will eliminate these elements of punishment, while achieving the social goal of public protection and the political goal of enforcing the sense of justice.

The Philosopher

To the Editor of Commentary:

With regard to Milton Himmelfarb's inference ["Gentlemen and Scholars," October 1973] from Aristotle's *Politics* (1253a) that we are "to regard the philosopher . . . as godlike," it might be equally true that we are to regard philosophers as beastlike. For we are told in the same place that the worst of animals is a man separated from law and justice. This, it seems to me, is the description *par excellence* of the philosopher. Philosophers in their passionate pursuit of wisdom are not bound by laws or justice, whatever these may be, but by their own prudence. And certainly philosophic prudence has more in common with the natural discretion of beasts than it does with the moderation of the pious, law-abiding, and truly just man.

William E. Johnston, Jr.
Claremont, California

Oil

To the Editor of Commentary:

Walter Laqueur and Edward Luttwak ["Oil," October 1973] gloss over a major implication of M. A. Adelman's work: the United States, by shoring up the internation oil cartel, bears almost sole responsibility for the continuing Middle East crisis.

Monopoly oil profits fuel warfare in the Middle East, both by giving oil-producing countries the means to fight one another and Israel and by tempting Western countries to intervene on behalf of the oil companies. These profits will continue only so long as two interdependent cartels control the oil supply: the cartel of oil-producing countries (OPEC), and the international oil cartel (the "Seven Sisters" and a "fringe" of smaller companies). Five of the Seven Sisters and many of the fringe companies are American.

Cartels are notoriously fragile. For while a cartel maximizes the long-run joint profits of its members, individual members can always make a big short-run profit at the expense of the rest by cutting prices. If one member cheats on prices, the rest then have to follow or lose even more money. Monopoly profits vanish as the companies bid each other down to a competitive price.

Professor Adelman argues, I believe correctly, that OPEC would collapse if, instead of a monolithic cartel, it faced a large number of competitive companies, each trying to tempt individual producing states to make a profit by breaking ranks with the rest. So what holds the oil cartel together? The Federal Trade Commission gave us the answer earlier this year: U.S. policy. Tax favors, restrictions on domestic output, oil-import quotas, and exemptions from antitrust mean that U.S. oil companies don't even have to resort to collusion to restrict output and fix prices. U.S. public officials, from the Texas Railroad Commission at home to the State Department abroad, do that for them. Since most of the members of the international cartel are American, the cartel would inevitably collapse without the support of the U.S. government. The ensuing outbreak of competition would bring more and cheaper oil, alleviating the "energy crisis." It would also drain away much of the motivation and means for war in the Middle East.

Polly Roberts
Berkeley, California

Walter Laqueur and Edward Luttwak write:

We fully agree with Polly Roberts that the OPEC cartel *could have* collapsed in the early 60's if the U.S. government had thrown its full weight against it. But the cartel has now become a state monopoly, or rather a multi-state oligopoly. Since few have yet realized the compelling necessity of violating the state sovereignty of the disruptive oil producers (i.e., the Arab ones) in order to protect the economic welfare of all, the present anarchy of the oil industry may continue for some time. Regulatory and fiscal measures on the part of the U.S. government can no longer control the process. Only force, or rather the threat of force, can now balance the oil equation, and it is up to the Europeans to recover their wits and self-confidence in order to act. They have the ships, they have the men, and they have the motive too, now that they have been hurt and humiliated by the selective embargoes decreed by the self-appointed Presidents and cardboard Princes of Araby. A cold winter might well do wonders for the moral and political health of Western Europe.

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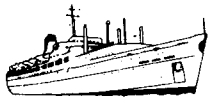

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Last summer, most people hardly felt the effect of the gasoline shortage. Many questioned if there really was a shortage after all.

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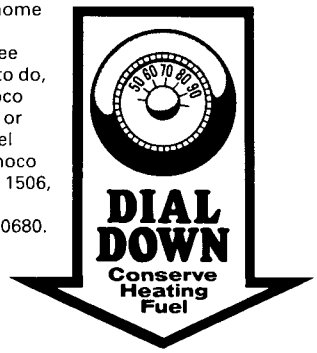
And, we're running ads like this one, urging everyone to conserve heating fuel wherever possible. The ads can't create more oil, but they can help make the oil there is go farther.

MAKE YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION EARLY: DIAL DOWN NOW

Every day people don't conserve there's just that much more heating fuel used, and that much less to get us through the really severe winter months.

So dial down today. And stay dialed down until the threat of shortage has passed. And, check your home for other ways to conserve. For a free booklet, on what to do, contact your Amoco heating fuel man, or write: Heating Fuel Conservation, Amoco Oil Company, MC 1506, P.O. Box 6110A, Chicago, Illinois 60680.



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Watergate and the Legal Order

Alexander M. Bickel

MONTHS ago, when the scandals of the Nixon administration were fewer and relatively simpler, there was some self-serving talk of a commonalty of error among the Watergate perpetrators, as the arresting officers might have called them, and the radical Left of the 1960's. Too much zeal, that had been the sin of his people, the President himself suggested in one of his Watergate speeches in the spring; it was a sin and inexcusable, but also venial. Like the zealots of the Left, these people had put their cause above the law. They had been led into their error by the toleration that much liberal opinion had shown for the zealotry of the Left, for draft-dodgers and demonstrators of all sorts. The lesson to be drawn was that the law is sacred, rising above all causes, and no violation of it is excusable, none. A rededication to law and order on all sides, by all factions, was called for. The President indeed had been long calling for it. Watergate, we were left to infer, was actually a vindication of the President's long-held position, and a reproach to that large body of liberal opinion which had tolerated lawlessness, and ended by infecting even the righteous with it.

The point was most vividly if plaintively called to attention by Jeb Stuart Magruder. (We lawyers kept cringing as lawyer after lawyer turned up. But there was enough to cringe at for everybody. Why does Magruder have to be called Jeb Stuart, my colleague C. Vann Woodward has asked?) Magruder noted that he had been taught ethics at Williams College by William Sloane Coffin, Jr. The symbolic expression of the theme!

This was all a vulgar attempt to exonerate the dishonorable, a prelude to plea-bargaining. And the symbol chosen for the theme was a bad fit. When William Sloane Coffin, Jr. taught Jeb Stuart Magruder ethics, he wasn't William Sloane Coffin, Jr. That was in the 50's, before Yale, and before there was any "Movement." It was when Benjamin Spock was still Dr. Spock, and before Coffin was Coffin.

And yet, to use the idiom of the Watergate actors, there is a point of contact, and it is of some interest, even though quite without taking account of it, sufficient explanations for much that has happened and for many of the actors may no doubt be found, or found unnecessary.

I don't know how many of Mr. Nixon's men can be credited, if that is the word, with self-righteous moral or ideological motivation. But perhaps for some of them moral or ideological imperatives clashed with the legal order more or less as they did for the radical Left in the 1960's. There is a well-known passage in E. M. Forster's essay, "What I Believe," where he says that if he had to "choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend," he hoped "I should have the guts to betray my country." This was written in 1939, and Forster had witnessed the attempt by both the Nazi and Soviet dictatorships to impose a total commitment and obligation to the state, itself embodying an ideology, which was to override all other commitments and relationships. The world was full of wretched stories of children informing against parents, wives against husbands and possibly also vice versa, friends against friends, all glorying in it. Against this, Forster was in revulsion. He says just before the passage I quoted that he believes in personal relations, which in the age of faith, of the clash of creed against creed, in which he was sorry to find himself, were regarded as "bourgeois luxuries" to be got rid of so as to make room for dedication to "some movement or cause." He says he hates the idea of causes, and then goes into the passage declaring his choice of friend over country.

But the passage has most often been taken out of historical context. Country has been read literally as meaning any organized society and its legal order, which perhaps is what Forster meant; and friend has been read to refer not only to the personal loyalties Forster had in mind but also, very much against his sense, to ideologies and causes—precisely what he hated. And so in Forster's dictum, as received if not altogether as intended, we can find a connection between some at least of Mr. Nixon's men and part at least of the radical Left. Ideological imperatives and per-

ALEXANDER M. BICKEL, a frequent contributor, is Chancellor Kent professor of law and legal history at Yale, and the author of many works on the American constitutional system, including *The Supreme Court and the Idea of Progress* and *Politics and the Warren Court*. The present article, in a somewhat different version, was read last November before a meeting of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

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sonal loyalty prevailed over the norms and commands of the legal order. They kept faith with their friends, and had the guts to betray their country.

It is not remarkable that self-righteousness and ideological fixation should be wedded to authoritarian attitudes, and that the temptation to abuse power should arise. What is interesting, what makes the point of contact a significant starting point for inquiry, what is interesting even about the vulgar—because wholly indiscriminate—attempt to turn Watergate into a reproach to liberal opinion, is that Watergate is evidence of a weakened capacity of our legal order to serve as a self-executing safeguard against this sort of abuse of power. The checks and balances of the government, the contrivance, in the words of the 51st *Federalist*, of "the interior structure of the government," so that "its several constituent parts may, by their mutual relations, be the means of keeping each other in their proper places"—this contrivance is working reasonably well. The inner structure was meant to insure accountability, and it is doing so. But it is accountability by crisis, accountability by trauma, accountability tending to shade into retribution. One would have expected that the legal order would have operated to prevent what we now know to have occurred. It is a first line of defense that has generally held: not always against plain theft, but effectively enough against self-righteous abuse of executive power in the service of ideological or moral ends. It has held in the past in this respect, making it unnecessary to reach the battlements and entrenchments of the constitutional checks and balances. It did not hold this time.

I come thus to the statement of a thesis. I do not pretend to explain Watergate or the Nixon Presidency. And I do not propose to understand, for fear that there may be some truth in the saying, *tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*. Again, I am far from suggesting that Watergate was inevitable. My thesis is only—or at least the only explicit statement of it I am willing to make is—that much of what happened to the legal and social order in the fifteen years or so before Watergate was prologue. The scandals of corruption in our history had their climates, their prologues in war-profiteering and in general relaxation of standards. The Vietnam war has produced no major scandal of corruption. It and much that preceded it produced a moral firestorm, which was the prologue to Watergate.

IN ORDER to identify those aspects of recent history which I think came to a point of contact with Watergate, I must draw some distinctions concerning the position of conscientious objection and of civil disobedience in our legal order, as I see it. Our law has traditionally recognized a certain autonomy of conscience, and has therefore allowed certain conscientious objections, particularly to war, although not to war alone, as became happily evident when the Supreme Court in 1972 upheld the constitutional right of the Amish not to submit their young to organized education past the eighth grade. And even beyond the autonomy of conscience that the law is able to make allowance for within itself, the legal order may be said to countenance conscientious disobedience.

Much depends on the kind of law that is in question, the demands it makes of the individual, the foundation it has in shared values, and the kind of disobedience to it and its source. Frequently, however, the unlawfulness of disobedience to law on sincerely held grounds of conscience is not taken as conclusive against the legitimacy of disobedience. We often consider, rather, that disobedience raises a question about the law at which it is directed, a question not only about its effectiveness—that is obvious—but about its rightness, or at least its utility.

In what I just said I have blurred a distinction, useful for many purposes, between conscientious objection and civil disobedience. Conscientious objection, as has been pointed out by many writers, among them notably Hannah Arendt and Ernest van den Haag, demands nothing more than exemption from a legal obligation. No further or broader challenge to a law inheres in conscientious objection. But as Hannah Arendt has written and as I have just implied, "conscientious objection can become politically significant when a number of consciences happen to coincide and the conscientious objectors decide to enter the marketplace and make their voices heard in public." There is then necessarily implicit a challenge to the law objected to, or at least the legal order perceives such a widespread manifestation of conscientious objection as a challenge to the law, and the objectors are assimilated to the ranks of civil disobedients.

As to civil disobedience, there is much conduct that bears its appearance and that in other, more unitary systems, which do not diffuse power and law-making authority as ours does, would indeed be civil disobedience. With us a great deal of such conduct is not. In our federation, there are laws within laws and laws above laws. Thus one system of laws which is valid and fully authoritative within itself may be called into question by appeal to another, generally superior system; and in some measure, it works the other way as well. It is possible, therefore, for men to behave in a manner which is lawful, but is not recognized as such by the legitimate authority in one or another place, and therefore constitutes defiance of that authority, and causes disorder; or in a manner that may turn out to be lawful, but that at the moment violates the positive law of a given place, also causes disorder, and what is more, cannot with assurance be assumed to prove lawful in the end. In a unitary system, behavior

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of this sort would carry every aspect of civil disobedience. But it is often invited by the many-tiered process of law formation that is characteristic of our system.

A GENERAL definition of civil disobedience, applicable to our legal order, would be the following: Civil disobedience is the act of disobeying formally binding general law on grounds of moral or political principle without challenging the validity of the law; or the incidental disobedience of general law which is itself neither challenged as invalid nor disapproved of in the course of agitating for change in public policies, actions, or social conditions which are regarded as bad on grounds of moral or political principle—all in circumstances where the legal order makes no allowance for the disobedience. This last qualification has to be added because the First Amendment is construed as making some allowance for the sort of incidental disobedience referred to in the second half of the definition.

In purpose if not in effect, civil disobedience differs greatly from conscientious objection. The effect of the coincidence of multiple consciences objecting to a law and the effect of civil disobedience may be the same. But conscientious objection is a withdrawal. Civil disobedience is ineluctably an attempt to coerce the legal order, an exercise of power in the sense in which Burke defined it: "Liberty, when men act in bodies, is *power*." And it is not easy to make room for it, although I shall argue that our legal order does so. Thus not only the Hobbesian but the contractarian view of the nature and foundation of society can tolerate no civil disobedience at all. The contractarian view legitimates government as a compact among citizens, embodying the agreement of each to abide the judgment of all. The ends of government are substantially predetermined in the contractarian view, in that they are limited by timeless principles, the rights of man. Government is allowed some margin of error, but the premise is that it will normally act only in plausible pursuit of predetermined ends. If it should not, says Locke, the remedy is revolution, and there is a right to use force against the government. Short of the right of revolution, there is an absolute duty to obey. Rousseau held that the people, expressing themselves through universal suffrage, give voice to the general will, although he allowed that they might also not. The general will is the highest good, and when the people by majority vote give it voice, the individual owes absolute obedience, even unto death. If at times a minority has hold of the true general will it follows that absolute obedience is equally owed to it. This in fact, said Rousseau, only forces the individual to be free.

The latest contribution to contractarian theory, by Professor John Rawls, in his *A Theory of Justice*, is somewhat curious. It defines the general will—called justice as fairness—in more detail than Rousseau, and commits government to its effectuation. Like Rousseau, it then insists on popular sovereignty, modified only by some power in the judges to keep government within the limits dictated by the general will. And it posits a duty to obey. But it makes allowance, one may think inconsistently, for civil disobedience, defined as above, with the proviso that it be public and willing to accept punishment. Civil disobedience is allowed because, it turns out, justice as fairness—the general will—is not always readily ascertainable, the majority and the judges may be wrong, or less right than a protesting minority, and civil disobedience can play its role in helping the entire society decide what is right. In that event, it would seem, there is less to the prior detailed definition of justice as fairness than met the eye.

In the actual American legal order, ends are less permanently predetermined than by contractarian theory, faith in majoritarianism is less enthusiastic than Rousseau's, readiness to have recourse to revolution is not as great as Locke's, and there is little willingness to accept the righteous dictates of a minority possessed of the true general will. What is above all important is consent—not a presumed theoretical consent, but a continuous actual one, born of continual responsiveness. There is popular sovereignty, and there are votes in which majorities or pluralities prevail, but that is not nearly all. Majorities are in large part fictions. They exist only on election day and they can be registered on very few issues. To be responsive and to enjoy consent, government must register numerous expressions of need and interest by numerous groups, and it must register relative intensities of need and interest. Neither the vote nor speech—the latter, after all, an elite exercise—sufficiently differentiates needs and interests, or expresses intensity. Civil disobedience can often effectively do so. Hence it is that civil disobedience has accompanied so many of the most fruitful reform movements in American history. Hence it is that its legitimacy must be recognized.

But there must be limits, both to conscientious objection and to civil disobedience, limits to be stated not as positive law imposed by the enforcement machinery of the legal order, but as a moral obligation, a duty to obey. For use of the enforcement machinery of the legal order denotes the point at which it has broken down. The test of a legal order is its self-executing capacity, its moral authority. In an extraordinarily sustained experience of civil disobedience and conscientious objection on the part of at least three distinct, sizable groups in the society over a period of some fifteen years, which perhaps no other society could have endured without a change of regime—in this sustained experience, I shall suggest, the limits were

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often transgressed. The experience started with white Southerners in the mid-50's; it was followed and overlapped by the civil-rights movement; and it ended with and was overlapped by the white-middle-class movement against the war, which bade fair for a while to take permanent shape as a movement addressing numerous other issues as well, from ecology up, down, and sideways to gay liberation. The limits, as I say, were transgressed, and in some measure, I am willing to suggest, Watergate is a replica of the transgressions.

A first and most easily stated limit was very clear to Lincoln when he opposed the *Dred Scott* decision. "We do not propose," he said, "that when Dred Scott has been decided to be a slave by the court, we as a mob will decide him to be free. . . . but we nevertheless do oppose that decision as a political rule which shall be binding. . . ." The line is thus drawn between the general law, the law of the land, as it is commonly called, enunciated in a judicial decision, or *mutatis mutandis* in legislation, and the judicial judgment addressed to the parties in an actual case. There is no moral duty always and invariably to obey the former. There is a moral duty to obey the latter.

This limit was transgressed repeatedly in the South during the 50's and 60's, by private and official persons, and by mobs who disobeyed or violated judicial decrees. It was transgressed as well by disruptive courtroom behavior on the part of the radical Left in the late 60's, which amounted to the same thing, denoting as it did a rejection of the process and necessarily, therefore, of its results. Both kinds of transgression were perhaps more spectacular than numerous, but they told.

Another sort of limit has to do with means. Violence must be a monopoly of the state. In private hands, whatever its possible misuses by the state, it is always an unjust weapon. It is inadmissible, but was of course widely used and excused. Only the other day the historian Gabriel Kolko said of the man who planted a bomb in 1970 at the University of Wisconsin's Mathematics Research Center, which killed one person and wounded four: "To condemn Karl Armstrong is to condemn a whole anguished generation. His intentions were more significant than the unanticipated consequences of his actions."

Some nonviolent interference with the justified and lawful activities and expectations of innocent third parties is an inevitable concomitant of civil disobedience, and if contained and civil, is to be borne, subject to other limits to which I shall come in a moment. But when the interference is massive, when it is not civil, when it borders on violence or threatens it, when it is coercive not in its ultimate intent, as all civil disobedience necessarily is, but in its immediate impact, when its imposition is not of inconvenience but of terror, then it is unacceptable. And yet we saw quantities of it.

Additional limits, at least equally important, are much more difficult to state. One, also having to do with means, is suggested by the action of Daniel Ellsberg in using his position of trust to spirit out the Pentagon Papers, or the action of the unknown person who handed to Jack Anderson a transcript of a secret meeting on the India-Pakistan war at the White House presided over by Henry Kissinger. There is in such cases the question whether a legal obligation was breached. This was and remains a question in some doubt in both the examples I am discussing, which the aborted Ellsberg litigation did not settle. I assume, strictly for purposes of argument, that a legal obligation was breached, although in truth I believe it to be quite doubtful that there is on the books a statute that effectively renders illegal what Ellsberg, for example, did.

At any rate, these were acts of conscience taken against at least a privately formulated obligation. They were taken in conditions where conscience could have been satisfied in part by resignation. Instead Ellsberg and the unknown person to whom I referred allowed their consciences to push them into affirmative action. That was not because as moral beings they could do no other. It was rather because they wanted to make others do otherwise than they were doing. Their acts, their own individual acts at the time they took them, moreover, not possibly their acts multiplied by the acts of thousands of others which in the aggregate might exert political pressure: their own acts, unaided by other independent consciences, had a different and greater impact than ordinary conscientious objection, I should say a coercive impact, lent them by the trust that had been reposed in the actors personally. These actors were not denying the legal order their own participation in its immoral activity, as they viewed it. They sought rather to coerce the legal order by destroying *pro tanto* the procedures by which it conducts its business.

I do not say that such acts can never be justified. Suppose Ellsberg had discovered evidence of plans to herd people into concentration camps and gas them, or evidence of treason? These, however, are examples of an extreme kind of moral outbreak activating the individual. My point is that impositional, coercive acts of conscience of this sort should require a much higher moral threshold than does passive conscientious objection, and I do not believe it was clear in either the Ellsberg or the Kissinger secret-meeting case that the threshold had been reached. Certainly the Vietnam war raised moral issues. But the secrecy of the Pentagon Papers did not raise the same ones, by any means, even though the mendacity of government is a serious matter. And it was self-deception to think that release of the Papers would solve the moral problem of the war. Anyone contemplating an impositional coercive act of conscience must recognize orders of magni-

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tude among moral questions. An insufficiently differentiated exaltation of wrongs to the same moral level is quite entirely the same as, and no less dangerous than, moral blindness.

Just as there are circumstances when a breach of duty of the impositional sort committed by Ellsberg could be justified, so conditions arise when extra-legal action by a President in the interest of national security are called for. Again, the threshold must be very high. But if challenged, such actions may in the proper circumstances be ratified as legal, if only from necessity, as the removal of Japanese-Americans from the West Coast in 1942 unfortunately was. The principle of legitimation is the simple one once stated by Justice Jackson: The Constitution is not a suicide pact. The President has the function at times, even the duty, to see that it does not become one. Lincoln discharged this duty. And even when not ratified by the institutions of the legal order—as the seizure of the steel industry by Harry Truman, or Lincoln's suspension of *habeas corpus,* or martial law in Hawaii in World War II, or domestic wiretapping by Presidents from Franklin D. Roosevelt through Nixon were not ratified—such actions are not necessarily condemned. But the threshold for taking them has in the past been enormously high. Legal norms have radiated with powerful force. In a paroxysm of paranoia, to state the case as indulgently as possible, the Nixon administration lowered the threshold. Early on, before Ellsberg, Mr. Nixon and his people may well have sorely abused what they regarded, not unjustly, as wiretapping authority legitimated by practice, and they at least contemplated other outrages, but it cannot be entirely a coincidence that Ellsberg's removal of the Pentagon Papers from the Rand Corporation was the occasion for creation of the White House plumbers unit, so called. Threshold for threshold.

I set aside the judgment made by a newspaper in publishing what Mr. Ellsberg spirited out. Here also careful discriminations are required, but they are not controlled and hardly affected, I think, by the provenance of the material. I would say only, touching this issue glancingly as I do, that short of the case—plans for concentration camps, treason, and the like—in which it is plainly justified, the more unjustified the breach of the government's trust in bringing the materials out, because their content is not such as to meet the high moral threshold required, the more justified and the easier the judgment of a newspaper in publishing them.

RETURNING to civil disobedience, let me restate, in approaching yet another limit, the grounds on which the legitimacy of civil disobedience can be rested. It is because on most issues we command no definite answers grounded in solid and generally shared values that we value an open, responsive, varied, and continual process of law-formation and provide numerous stages of decision-making, most of them provisional, and numerous opportunities for revision and resistance, including civil disobedience. But not only do the outcomes of the law-formation process, however provisional, count for something; what is more important, in the middle distance, and if also provisionally then over a much longer term, so that for a time they have a relatively enduring aspect, we do as a legal order hold some values, some principles, by which we judge the process and even some of its outcomes. Unless these are defended against coercive political action, there is no legal order, or at any rate, there is not this one. Therefore, the use of civil disobedience, not to redress grievances on the assumption of the continued operation of the system and by plausible appeal to its own principles, but against it, ought not be tolerated. Civil disobedience is one thing, revolutionary activity quite another, and the difference between them is told not only by their manner, but also by their objectives.

The distinction is rigorously drawn by Mr. Rawls in his *A Theory of Justice,* to which I referred earlier. The distinction was not drawn with anything like Mr. Rawls's rigor in the 60's. Much of the disobedience of the late 60's was aimed not at the government of the day, but at the system, and it opposed the system, not as flawed and perfectible, but as evil and abominable. The rhetoric was loud and it was reckless and vicious. It abandoned all pretense of allegiance, it acknowledged no restraint and no bounds. Yet it was often tolerated and even echoed by seemingly responsible opinion in the press, in the universities, and among political leaders. Cries of repression and of fascism, for example, were raised almost as soon as Mr. Nixon took office, and they were irresponsible and unfounded at the time, no matter how plausible they may now seem in retrospect. At the time, they were bound to have an effect on administration morale. Men who are loudly charged with repression before they have done anything to substantiate the charge are apt to proceed to substantiate it.

In a larger sense, toleration of this rhetoric and of disobedience with such aims undermined the moral authority of the liberal tradition in this country, which as Louis Hartz pointed out years ago is at once also the American conservative tradition, or at least the tradition that conserves the liberal American legal and political order. Hartz quoted the distinguished insight of Gunnar Myrdal, as he called it: "America is . . . conservative. . . . But the principles conserved are liberal and some, indeed, are radical." Liberalism has always been challenged from both flanks, and has always been a little anxious, since Jefferson, and like the Center in the third French republic, to make no enemies on the Left. It has historically been successful in coopting all but the revolution-

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ary Left, moving far enough toward it to draw its sympathizers and outriders, but generally not so far as to be itself coopted rather than coopting. To move too far is to lose moral authority, and that rather than numbers is the source of the liberal ascendancy in American politics, which safeguards the norms of the American legal order against the lawlessness and ultimate authoritarianism of radical movements. Liberalism embraced too much of the Left in the 40's, and the result was the triumph for a moment of the radicalism of Joseph R. McCarthy. It embraced inexcusably much in the late 60's. In this sense Watergate is to American liberalism as McCarthyism was.

STILL another necessary limit of civil disobedience was transgressed. Like law itself, civil disobedience is habit-forming, and the habit it forms is destructive of the legal order. Disobedience, even if legitimate in every other way, must not be allowed to become epidemic. Individuals are under a duty to ration themselves, to assess occasions in terms of their relative as well as absolute importance. For disobedience is attended by the overhanging threat of anarchy. We did not ration ourselves, and those in authority in the universities in the late 60's imposed no rationing. Coming as the third wave of massive disobedience movements in fifteen years, the demonstrations of the late 60's, including the most peaceable and legitimate ones of all, carried the clear and present danger of anarchy. And their objectives were of course not restricted to stopping the war. They went on to ecology and to numberless other social and economic objectives.

The point may be put in another and more general way with reference not only to civil disobedience. In 1969, President Kingman Brewster of Yale charged a number of speakers about to appear at a Yale alumni seminar with addressing the subject, "What is happening to morality today?" My answer at the time, if I may quote myself, was: "It threatens to engulf us." The legal order heaved and groaned for years under a prodigality of moral causes, and if not broken, it is no wonder that it is badly bent. Vietnam, let us not forget, was not only a moral error, but for its authors, a moral urgency. The urgencies of "peace with honor," of the clean life, of patriotism—in a word, Watergate—were merely the last straws. It is ironic, but entirely natural, that "law-and-order" as a moral imperative should have clashed with the legal order.

The legal order, after all, is an accommodation. It cannot sustain the continuous assault of moral imperatives, not even the moral imperative of "law-and-order," which as a moral imperative has only a verbal resemblance to the ends of the legal order. No legal order can sustain such a bombardment, and the less so a federal constitutional order of separated and diffused powers. It is the premise of our legal order that its own complicated arrangements, although subject to evolutionary change, are more important than any momentary objective. This premise must give way at times, of course, to accommodate inevitable change. And change which is significant, as Justice Brandeis once wrote, manifests itself more "in intellectual and moral conceptions than in material things." But our legal order cannot endure too rapid a pace of change in moral conceptions, and its fundamental premise is that its own stability is itself a high moral value, in most circumstances the highest. The legal order must be given time to absorb change, to accommodate it to itself as well as itself to it. If the pace is forced, there can be no law.

The assault upon the legal order by moral imperatives wasn't only or perhaps even the most effectively an assault from the outside. It came as well from within, in the Supreme Court headed for fifteen years by Earl Warren. The judicial hallmark of Chief Justice Warren was that when some lawyer would be standing before him arguing his side of a case on the basis of some legal doctrine or other, or making a procedural point, or contending that the Constitution allocated competence over a given issue to another branch of government than the Supreme Court or to the states rather than to the federal government, the Chief Justice would shake him off saying, "Yes, yes, yes, but is it [whatever the case exemplified about law or about the society] is it *right*? Is is *good*?" More than once, and in some of its most important actions, the Warren Court got over doctrinal difficulties or issues of the allocation of competences among various institutions by asking what it viewed as a decisive practical question: If the Court did not take a certain action which was *right* and *good,* would other institutions do so, given political realities? The Warren Court took the greatest pride in cutting through legal technicalities, in piercing through procedure to substance. But legal technicalities are the stuff of law, and piercing through a particular substance to get to procedures suitable to many substances is in fact what the task of law most often is.

From within and from without, then, the legal order was bombarded by moral imperatives, and was reduced to submission time and again. The derogators of procedure and of technicalities, and other anti-institutional forces, rode high, on the bench as well as off. These were the armies of conscience and of ideology. If it is parodoxical that they were also the armies of a new populism, it is not a paradox to wonder at, for it has occurred often before, not least of all in Rousseau, who may be counted the patron philosopher of the time. The paradox, of course, is that the people whom the populist exalts may well, will frequently, not vote for the results that conscience and ideology dictate. But then one can always hope, or identify

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the general will with the people despite their votes, and let the Supreme Court bespeak the people's general will when the vote comes out wrong.

It has been a time of populism to the Left and populism to the Right, strongly encouraged by the Supreme Court. There was a powerful strain of populism in the rhetoric by which the Court supported its one-man, one-vote doctrine, and after promulgating it the Court strove mightily to strike down all barriers, not only the poll tax, but duration of residence, all manner of special qualifications, and even in some measure, age, to the enlargement and true universalization of the franchise. In this the Court led successfully. It became irresistible dogma that no qualification for voting made any sense. It didn't matter that you were a transient—the election is a snapshot, and wherever it catches you, you vote with no questions asked. No connection to place is relevant, there is no room for balancing interests and places, no need to structure institutions so that they might rest on different electoral foundations and in the aggregate be better able to generate consent. Every impediment, every distortion, including the electoral college, must go. All that matters is the people, told by the head.

Here the connection with attitudes that at least contributed to Watergate is direct. It was utterly inevitable that such a populist fixation should tend toward the concentration of power in that single institution which has the most immediate link to the largest constituency. Naturally the consequence was a Gaullist Presidency, making war, making peace, spending, saving, being secret, being open, doing what is necessary, and needing no excuse for aggregating power to itself beside the excuse that it could do more effectively what other institutions, particularly Congress, did not do very rapidly or very well, or under particular political circumstances would not do at all. This was a leaf from the Warren Court's book, but the Presidency could undertake to act anti-institutionally in this fashion with more justification because, unlike the Court, it could claim not only a constituency, but the largest one. This Presidency acknowledged accountability only at quadrennial plebiscites, but not to other, less plebiscitary institutions, and certainly not to irresponsible private ones, or to something called "public opinion," which is led and formed in mysterious ways, rather than being told by the head.

The accumulation of power in the Presidency did not begin with Richard M. Nixon, of course, but it reached heights made possible by the populism of the day. There was a time there, soon after the election of 1972, when Mr. Nixon gave the impression that he thought the American political process had taken place, so to speak, that it was over for a while, and that he could simply rule. We know again now that an election is the beginning as well as the culmination of a political process, and that the President, separate, independent, and critically important as he is, is part of the process, not its ruler. We were being led to forget, however, and had it not been for Watergate, conceivably we might have forgotten.

The Presidency of inherent powers, futurism, populism, and certainly moral urgency—these have too often been the vestments of liberalism in this century, though worn for the most part with a certain modesty. In the 60's, the liberals, or large segments of them, consented to share these vestments, all but the first, with the radical Left, which adding several dashes of outrageous color, wore them immodestly. Diffusion of power, pragmatism, the relativism of values, gradualism, institutionalism, process, procedure, legality, technicalities—these were allowed to become the cloak of conservatism, indeed of reaction, and were not wanted on the voyage. Well, this cloak was not wanted in the White House either, we have learned. I don't know when Mr. Nixon caught the liberals bathing, but he did walk off with their clothes, and stood forth wearing the plebiscitary Presidency, his own futurism, and his own moral imperatives. We are all liberals, we are all conservatives, Mr. Nixon might have said, as for Jefferson we were all Republicans and all Federalists in 1800.

WATERGATE is the latest assault, the only one which was at once vicious and powerful, although other powerful ones were damaging, albeit not vicious—the latest assault in an age of assaultive politics. We cannot survive a politics of moral attack. I don't know how near a thing Watergate was, but perhaps it will be said that it was too near. We must resume the politics of what Burke called the "computing principle: adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing." The denominations to be computed are very often moral, to be sure. But few if any are absolute, few if any imperative. And the highest morality almost always is the morality of process, what Professor Paul Freund, speaking of Justice Brandeis's approach to issues, called "morality of mind."

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Is Israel Losing Popular Support?
The Evidence of the Polls

Earl Raab

PERHAPS the clearest lesson of the Yom Kippur war is that Israel is now almost absolutely dependent on the United States for its very existence. Europe, the old charnel-house which created the practical necessity of an Israel, has abandoned her. While token Asian pilots flew overhead for the Arabs, African nations defaulted one by one, dramatizing Israel's isolation from the politically new continents. Given the Russian involvement, only the military and diplomatic resources of the United States stood between Israel and possible extinction. The firmness of the American commitment to Israel has, then, become more crucial than ever. How firm is that commitment?

According to one Congressman, echoing a widely held judgment: "Attitudes toward support of Israel are 'softer' than they were in 1967. My colleagues feel it among their constituencies." By "softer," of course, he meant less supportive. Yet at the moment he was making that statement, an overwhelming number of Congressmen and Senators, including himself, were signing a resolution for military support to Israel. Nor did the public-opinion polls show any slippage in favorable American attitudes toward Israel since 1967. In October 1973 the polls reflected the same pattern of opinion as in 1967, 1969, or 1970: 47 per cent sympathetic to Israel, 6 per cent sympathetic to the Arabs, the rest uncommitted or opinionless. Such a polling ratio among people holding an active opinion on any issue is normally considered a landslide.

On the other hand, while the American people wish Israel well, they are evidently not willing to risk very much to save her. This was even true in 1967. In June of that year, only 16 per cent of those who said that they had followed the events in the Middle East advocated supporting Israel with economic aid and military supplies, and only 5 per cent with American troops. In March of 1970, when 44 per cent of the public expressed sympathy for Israel (against 3 per cent for the Arabs), only 14 per cent favored direct American aid. In making such choices, the respondents were also possibly making some judgment of Israel's need. But when faced point-blank with the question of sending troops in case Israel was about to be swallowed up, the majority of Americans still said no. Nor was this merely a reflection of a general reluctance to send troops anywhere. For whereas only one-third of the American population was willing to send troops to prevent Israel from completely "going under" to Russia and the Arabs, two-thirds were willing to send troops to fight in Berlin, in case Russia and East Germany closed approaches to West Berlin.

The sum of such indicators is to place Israel in an ambivalent position on the scale of American public opinion. In the gross, Americans sympathize with Israel, but not so intensely that they are ready to sacrifice a great deal to save her. In an atmosphere of such relatively weak salience, situational factors which have nothing to do with Israel itself can have a dominant influence. An illustrative analogy is the classic poll question which asked Americans whether they would vote for an overtly anti-Jewish Congressional candidate. About one-third of the sample said that the candidate's anti-Jewish stance "wouldn't make any difference." In other words, situational factors would prevail. If the candidate were going to lower taxes, and if that was their primary interest, then they would vote for him—thereby accepting his anti-Semitic platform, even if they weren't anti-Semitic themselves. The parallel in this case is to be found not only in the relatively low intensity of the favorable opinion toward Israel, but in the level of indifferentism which shadows this favorable opinion. Over half of the poll samples have consistently been either uncommitted or opinionless, even in periods of high Middle East crisis. Together, these suggest the potency of factors extrinsic to Israel itself in affecting attitudes toward Israel—a fuel shortage, for example.

Another factor affecting the significance of the

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gross statistical sympathy for Israel among the American people is suggested by V. O. Key's definition of an *effective* public opinion: "Those opinions held by private persons which governments find it prudent to heed." That is, the principle of "one man, one vote" does not apply to the assessment of effective public opinion. In political practice, opinion is normally weighted according to *intensity,* which usually carries with it some dimension of informed attentiveness. The "public opinion" which "governments find it prudent to heed" is often, and especially in foreign policy, the opinion of selected publics.

On the subject of Israel and the Middle East, the conventional population groups (except, of course, for the Jews) turn out to have the same attitudes as the population in general. Whether young or old, Democrat or Republican, Catholic or Protestant, Eastern or Western, Americans are favorable toward Israel, but not very intensely so. There are, however, two special publics, fairly amorphous elite groups, who do differ on Israel from most other American groups. Because these groups are highly "attentive," they have to be taken seriously as potential symptoms of, if not necessarily influences on, the future course of American policy.

The first, and no doubt the less influential of these publics, is the Christian clergy. On the two flash occasions when Israel's life seemed to have been in peril—1967 and 1973—official American Christian leadership was gaudily silent. Some leading individual clergymen spoke out on behalf of Israel, but a number of individual clergymen who had been considered "friendly," and with whom the Jews had had much concourse, said nothing or were uncommitted, as were most of the formal establishments of both the Protestant and Catholic churches. This past October, for example, at a time when the Soviet Union was pouring arms into the Arab countries, and Israel's existence depended on munitions replacements from the United States, the official response of the National Council of Churches was, in substance, to call for both the Soviet Union and the United States to halt arms shipments to the belligerents. That would be roughly equivalent to calling for an "impartial" six-month food embargo on both Biafra and California. In one way or another, such "even-handed" lack of sympathy for Israel marked establishment Christian responses throughout the country.

This checkered response from Christian clergy and leadership bodies is not significant as an indicator of general public opinion. The current effect of the clergy on the political attitudes of their constituencies is, by all accounts, slim. Various surveys in recent years have found yawning gaps, of up to 40 per cent, between the opinions of clergymen and the people who attend their churches on such questions as Vietnam and civil rights. Moreover, the chief preoccupation of the clergy in the Middle East—the plight of the Arab refugees and of the Palestinian Arabs in general—is peripheral to the main consideration of the general public. For American public opinion on the Middle East has not been shaped by moral judgments about the needs or rights of the Arabs. In 1970, when more Americans than not believed that "Arab refugees are treated badly in areas occupied by Israel," public opinion was at the same time overwhelmingly sympathetic to Israel.

Yet neither, on the other side, has American public opinion been shaped by moral judgments about the needs and rights of the Jews. Back in 1948, when a moral obligation toward the remnant of European Jewry might have seemed unarguable, only a small minority of Americans said they favored the creation of Israel because "Jews have been persecuted," or because "Jews are entitled to a home." The fulcrum of popular American support for Israel has nothing to do with Israel as a Jewish state; it is, rather, the belief that "Israel is a small democratic nation which is trying to preserve its independence." And American public opinion has become more sympathetic over the years as it has become more apparent that the Soviet Union, in its drive for influence in the Middle East, is the main force attempting to violate that independence.

The clergy, then, is not likely to be a major factor in reversing the generally favorable American attitude toward Israel. But it could exercise a disproportionate influence on people in government who—remembering that significant elements of the clergy anticipated widespread shifts of opinion on civil rights and Vietnam in the 60's—might take the clergy's lukewarm stand on Israel now as an augury of changes in public sentiment to come.

So too with the second special public which might eventually touch a counter-nerve in American public opinion. This group, as a representative of the Committee for New Alternatives in the Middle East (CONAME) recently described it, is "made up of some elements of the anti-war movement [whose] concern is that America might get into another Vietnam involvement in the Middle East." While many members of the old anti-war movement see a distinction between Vietnam and Israel, there are others who see none. For such people, the United States remains a force for evil in the world, and Israel, as an ally and client of the United States, shares in its vicious character. Thus Daniel Berrigan only last October told a meeting of the Association of Arab University Graduates in Washington that Israel is "a criminal Jewish community . . . stamped with the imperial faces whose favor she has courted: the creation of an elite of millionaires, generals, and entrepreneurs."

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The influence of people like Berrigan, and that of the New Left generally, has of course suffered a spectacular decline in the past few years. This is not the case with another tendency within the old anti-war movement—the neo-isolationist current. Unlike the Americaphobes of the New Left, the neo-isolationists are not themselves in the main hostile to Israel. Some of them, however, may well be open to a certain kind of appeal from forces hostile to Israel. For example, an array of pro-Arab groups from around the country sent a telegram last October to a long list of Congressmen warning against a new Vietnam and condemning massive economic aid to Israel at a time when "our people need economic aid *here at home.*"

Such an appeal, in addition to its attractions for all those who believe that the United States cannot attend to its domestic problems while pursuing an active foreign policy, is also thought to be especially enticing to the black electorate. Now the poll data show that while almost half of the black population is without opinion on the Middle East, black Americans who do have an opinion are four times more sympathetic to Israel than to the Arabs. Furthermore, blacks who are favorable to Israel are at least as willing to send troops to save Israel from disaster as are whites. Nevertheless, the black intelligentsia tends to be more sympathetic than most other blacks to the Arabs as part of the "third world," and it was presumably in response to this pressure that several black Congressmen who signed the original Phantom-jet resolution in Congress later asked that their names be removed from newspaper ads replicating the resolution.

Neo-isolationist sentiment is particularly strong on the issue of sending troops to Israel. To be sure—as Senator McGovern pointed out in explaining why he was prepared to endorse Senator Hatfield's resolution prohibiting American troops from being sent to Israel—the Israelis neither need nor want American troops. Yet the Hatfield proposal is more than merely *pro forma*. It is an explicit statement of the limited nature of America's commitment to Israel, the limited importance of Israel to American interests. And unlike the anti-Israel sentiments of Father Berrigan and his friends, this fear of an American "overcommitment" to Israel has a wide echo in public opinion. Thus in late October, a Harris poll found an overwhelming majority of Americans saying that we "should not become overcommitted to Israel or we will find ourselves involved in another Vietnam."

It is not that Americans have simply returned to the kind of philosophical isolationism which marked the 1930's. On a scale developed by the Institute for International Social Research, the percentage of Americans rated as completely or predominantly "internationalist" dropped from 65 to 56 per cent between 1964 and 1972, while the percentage of those completely or predominantly "isolationist" rose from 8 to 9 per cent. But in response to individual statements like: "The U.S. should mind its own business and let other countries get along as best they can," and "We shouldn't think so much in international terms but concentrate more on national problems here at home," the percentage opting for the domestic emphasis rose from a little more than half in 1964 to about three-quarters in 1972. And 9 out of 10 Americans in 1972 agreed with the statement that "The U.S. should continue to play a major role internationally, but cut down on some of its responsibilities abroad." In other words, despite general American sympathy for Israel, and general recognition that Israel is good for America, a coalition of sentiments could develop to push the American line of commitment back to a point which becomes less and less meaningful for Israel's continued existence.

However, there is also reason to believe that the "softness" of public opinion on Israel is being overestimated in some quarters. It is noteworthy that the American public has not yet balked at any action actually taken by the government in support of Israel. The American public in 1973 was more favorable toward the idea of sending aid to Israel than it was in 1967. Over three-quarters of Americans polled in late October approved of the aid that had been sent to Israel, as against only 4 per cent who disapproved. It is also noteworthy that after the energy crisis had become front-page news, the American public said by a ratio of two to one that we did not have to "go along with the Arabs" because of the need for their oil.

In all, the design of American public opinion on support to Israel suggests that it will in the end be shaped by the actions and opinions of official political leadership in Washington. For public opinion tends to be much less influential in the shaping of foreign policy in America than it is in the making of domestic policy. Foreign affairs seem rather remote and technical to most people. They do not feel the competence which their daily experience gives them to judge many domestic issues, and would prefer, if possible, to leave foreign policy to more skilled hands. As one consequence of this phenomenon, public opinion on foreign policy is particularly vulnerable to the law suggested by Hadley Cantril: "When an opinion is not solidly structured, an accomplished fact tends to shift opinion in the direction of that accomplished fact." The somewhat ambivalent state of public opinion toward Israel could be described as "not solidly structured." This means that the elite actions of political leadership, of government, could be decisive in either strengthening or weakening general

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public support for Israel. In the days of controversy about the specific partition plans for Palestine, American public opinion, as measured by the polls, dramatically followed the shifts of the U.S. government position. When the United States approved the late 1947 UN plan for partition, 65 per cent of the American people said they approved. When the United States then developed and stated objections to the plan, American public opinion at one point dropped to a 24-per-cent approval of that same plan. The American government's increased concern about Russian involvement in the Middle East, and its increased support of Israel in recent years, have apparently been reflected as well in public opinion.

In foreign affairs, then, policy-makers are automatically influential opinion-makers as well. They are still, of course, subject to long- and short-range public moods which have become "solidly structured." National political leadership has often bent unwillingly to such moods, as in the early demobilization of troops after World War II, or in recent Vietnam policy. Roosevelt's administration fought the isolationist mood of the country up to the very morning of Pearl Harbor. But when—as in the case of Israel—prevailing moods are less certain, leadership in Washington is normally determinative for public opinion.

Consequently, if the national leadership pulls back, the American public will not demand support for Israel. If the leadership continues to insist on the crucial connection between Israel's survival and basic American interests, then the American public will support, however reluctantly, the perceived imperatives of American foreign policy. The decisive consideration here is and will remain the strength of Washington's will.

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Prisoners of War

Joan Colebrook

May 4-May 12, 1973

A TRIP to New York City, to see what light may be thrown by recent returnees from Vietnam upon a kind of psychological warfare peculiar to the 20th century.

The spring sun illuminates the grass in Central Park and the frail green of the city's trees—but it can hardly be said that the world political situation receives enough clarification. In conversation with a British editor (who has made special studies of Southeast Asia, and who through the 60's paid visits to Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore) we come to agree that democracies in general are more vulnerable than one might have thought to indirect propaganda; and that in America itself, credulity has not declined, but seems rather on the increase. We note that in the germ-warfare campaign of the early 50's in Korea, the North Koreans brought in Communist observers to hear the confessions of tortured and brainwashed American and British soldiers. These confessions were then broadcast to the world at large. None of the returned men, once freed, supported the germ-warfare accusation. It had all been for external (non-American) consumption.

Ten years later the Communists seem to be playing for heavier stakes. The North Vietnamese bring in non-Communist United States observers to listen to rehearsed statements extracted from U.S. prisoners, aiming for publicity *inside* the United States. They succeed in making fools of numerous Americans, and indirectly, via the media, hundreds of others. Ramsey Clark can describe the "Zoo" without knowing what it is. A Navy flyer complains that while journalists are being duped, he himself is being tortured. And so on.

As THE bus crawls down Fifth Avenue this May morning, I am trying to get through a sheaf of reports of news conferences with returned POW's. It is a muffled experience, like deserting the real world with its live noises—the grinding of the bus, the voices from the nearby seats, the sirens—for some subterranean country where prisoners are kept in darkened isolated cells, in caves, chained up in bunkers, once or twice buried up to their necks in the ground.

The preliminary action has had a familiar American ring. With the help of 2,000 doctors, nurses, and administrative personnel, with big Medevac planes, with blue Air Force ambulances, with "comfort" kits and long-distance telephone calls, the returnees are evacuated and turned over to public-relations representatives appointed by the Pentagon (themselves carefully briefed in all possible sensitivity and tact). The prisoners, smiling and silent at first, begin to speak—returning in memory to their imprisonment, but with a curious modesty often characteristic of physically strong and active men. Their stories vary according to the location of their capture and imprisonment—North or South; according to their attitude to North Vietnamese demands; according to their rank. But it is clear at last how bad their treatment was. For in spite of heavily propagandized interviews—arranged in Hanoi, and attended by a number of idealistic Americans, during which interviews the beleaguered pilots give statements to the effect that they are quite happy and well-treated, that they support the North Vietnamese people's democracy, that they only want the war to end—the truth, only slowly apparent, is that a large number of them, perhaps 80 per cent, were tortured until they "broke." Some observers at press conferences—for instance Telford Taylor at the International Club in Hanoi on January 10 of this year—see tense bewildered men who stand blinking in the glare of floodlights, who give names and ranks and turn away. Taylor expresses to the North Vietnamese his disapproval of this "exhibition," and later in another area he talks to a prisoner who explains that he (Taylor) is now in the "Zoo," that is, a section where a group of men is held permanently so that they can be available to foreign observers.

Behind the Zoo's façade lies a horror story of coercion. The torture of the "ropes" is described frequently—trussing the body so tightly that the arms and legs begin to turn numb and black, and then administering beatings in this position. As one POW, Colonel Guttersen, attests: "I think when we demonstrate it you will realize that . . . a simple piece of rope like this will do the job adequately." Added variants are iron ankle clamps drawn tighter and tighter until they cut

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into the nerves; drawing the body into a ball so that the toes are almost in the mouth, as well as hanging and swinging in this position; punctured lungs, broken limbs and ribs; not to mention interrogation after periods without water, without sleep, or with drugs. There is, of course, a point beyond which a normal man cannot resist, and gives in to all demands.

"I've been broken," Navy Captain James Mulligan admits, "I think everyone here has been broken. We went through agony again and again." Commander Richard Stratton shows scars on his legs and tells of being forced at gunpoint to appear at a news conference on January 5, 1967. Marine Lieutenant Colonel John Howard Dunn ponders that he thought himself a "superman." "However, I found out they were clever, using a high level of pain over a long period." Air Force Captain Joseph Milligan, chained in a ball and left for days on an earth floor, saw his wounds fester and was grateful to have them eaten by maggots. Michael Benge, former employee of the Agency for International Development, tells of dysentery and beriberi, of falling hair and teeth, of an operation with a rusty razor blade, of two missionaries who were his friends, dying for lack of medical care. The power of resistance alone is stressed in all these stories. "The only weapons we had," claims Colonel Lewis Shattuck, "were our bodies and our pain."

THE parallel between the treatment of captured POW's in Vietnam and those captured in North Korea is inescapable. During the Korean conflict, 1,600,000 Americans served with the UN troops, and prisoners taken are spread among a score of camps, camps often reached by desperate marches through knee-deep snow, the wounded jolting along in rough carts. Survivors give their prisons names like "Pak's Palace" (supervised by a character called "Dirty-Pictures Wong") and "Death Valley"—labels as famous then as today's "Zoo" and "Hanoi Hilton." In Korea the UN holds thousands of prisoners in its compounds (130,000 Koreans and 20,000 Chinese on Koje Island alone) and these, by refusing to be expatriated, complicate the truce attempts in the summer of 1951. In Camp Number 2, 12,440 of the 16,978 Chinese prisoners sign petitions in blood saying they will kill themselves rather than return to China. While the Russians are using American POW's as hostages, and while the Indian government is trying to arrange compromises—with apparent agreement with Peking and Pyongyang (this is arbitrarily rejected by Vyshinsky)—the POW camps are the scene of bitter anti-Communist struggles. At least 3,000 tattoo themselves with the slogan "OPPOSE COMMUNISM—RESIST RUSSIA."

Probably as a result of embarrassment at such a loss of face, the Soviet press and radio spring into a compensatory propaganda campaign, and try to convince the world that the U.S. army has been waging war with bacteria. Pak Heung Yung (later executed) makes the disclosure in February 1952. Yuri Rastvorov, who later defects from the Soviet mission in Tokyo, recalls Moscow's order that the mission collect from the Japanese Communist party all possible evidence that the U.S. is planning to start a germ-war offensive:

> I could not help laughing; even my chiefs found various items hard to swallow. One charge was that the U.S. Army had been purchasing Japanese corpses which were to be shipped to an American hospital in the center of Tokyo for experiments in extracting bacteria.

While the campaign gets going in the Far East, others in Europe—Ilya Ehrenburg, Pierre Joliot-Curie, Dennis Pritt—call meetings against the "bestial Americans." Pravda follows up with daily bulletins. And while the Russians are rejecting the "neutral investigation" demanded by the UN, confessions of guilt from imprisoned Americans begin to be made public—for instance those of Colonel Frank H. Schwable and Corporal Batchelor.

After about a year it is revealed that thousands of U.S. prisoners have been put through an intensive screening process disguised as normal interrogation. The small number of those who show character defects or weaknesses have been subjected to various intense pressures, i.e., torture. The basic idea of confession and the techniques worked out for extracting it were developed in Russia, but while much of the interrogation in Korea is carried out by Soviet specialists, there are also Chinese interrogators trained in Soviet-operated schools in Peking. It seems that a certain repetitive technique (which may originally have been associated with a custom traditional to China of reciting texts and principles), perfected by Mao's *ssu hsiang kai tsao*—that is, "transformation-of-thoughts" program—has also been in use. Some of the Korean returnees can only make their declarations with the precision of phonograph records, and if interrupted have to go back and begin at the beginning. The word "brainwash" is heard for the first time in the West.

IN AN apartment that is the top half of one of those well-kept brownstones not far from the river on East 66th Street I meet a man in khaki uniform, tall, dignified-looking, calm-featured, silver-haired. This is Brigadier General Ernest Reid, Jr., who as a young marine made the Inchon landing on September 15, 1950. "It was my first actual combat, not so very different from maneuvers, except when it got to eyeball-to-eyeball fighting. . . ." He grimaces. "I was captured on a convoy action after the Chinese entered the war. It was, I think, November 28 when we were driving north and trying to push

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the Chinese back. The word was to forge ahead at all costs. Anyway, the convoy got cut in half while we were still short of the objective. We fought in fact until we had no ammunition left. Then we agreed to surrender the able-bodied of this mixed group if the wounded could be returned."

I ask how he felt when surrender became inevitable. "How did I feel? I'd been prepared to be killed or wounded, but not to be captured." He projects a classic military determination. "It was a shock; for a Marine that kind of defeat is unheard of. The Chinese respected us, we were never beaten, for instance, we had the same food they did—but we had to walk in sub-zero weather, many of us with wounds and sore feet. When we got to the camp the interrogation started. There would be questions as to origin, is your father a millionaire, et cetera. This always led to discussions of American corruption." Because he was not a pilot, and at that time only a junior officer, he was not tortured or put under too much pressure. "The pilots and senior officers were put through the whole routine," he adds. "They were stripped and put nude in the snow, then brought in to be revived and questioned—then put in the snow again. We called it the 'hot and cold routine.' For the most part the Koreans were more brutal than the Chinese." (Harrison Salisbury, writing in 1972, notes that North Korea is still more isolated from the Western world than all other countries, not excepting Albania, that here Kim Il-Sung stares down from every point, that the media regularly accuse Americans of the most horrendous atrocities, that during his stay he could not even get the chairman of a factory committee to say how many people lived in her district!)

General Reid describes the cold of that 1950-51 winter, the miserable saltless sorghum with an occasional piece of seaweed. "Most of us got rickets and beriberi. Then there were long boring propaganda lectures . . . we soon got to know the various Western collaborators." The name of Wilfred Burchett comes up, the Australian journalist who is supposed to have acted as an interrogator in Korea. "We were given the New York *Daily Worker* and the Peking papers. And of course there were books written by Wilfred Burchett, and Felix Greene and Anna Louise Strong . . . yes, I met men who'd been questioned by Burchett. He'd say, 'You're the aggressor,' and so on. Of course he wouldn't do the torturing, he'd leave it to others. After that came the germ-warfare campaign. Next to the camp they set up an exhibition, of pictures of dead animals supposedly dropped from airplanes with germs in them, foxes, rats, et cetera."

I ask how it appeared to them. "It seemed laughable to us, it was so far out it didn't make sense. There were pieces of metal, for instance, supposedly from the containers they found; these might have been got anywhere. Among ourselves we thought they'd done it to make the villagers go on a rat hunt and clean up their huts, in this way killing two birds with one stone. . . . One senior officer, now Lieutenant General Thrash, was kept in solitary for a year while they tried to get a confession from him. They kept him half-frozen without exercise and gave him hour after hour of interrogation. Yes, later I met a man who'd begin to cry after he'd had a few drinks, and describe how he confessed. They sent him to Panmunjom, had him photographed, just like they did with the 'broken' POW's in Vietnam. He'd repeat over and over in an agonized way how they'd made him do it." (The charge of germ warfare isn't to die with the end of the Korean war. In June 1964 the New York *Times* reports Fidel Castro claiming something similar, but "the rain has prevented the gathering of samples." And in Australia a phony story of "nerve gas" used in the Vietnam war is circulated in 1968 by a professor of microbiology at the University of Melbourne.)

The apartment has yellow curtains and the sun streams in onto graceful furniture and a piano with sheet music—Ravel and Chopin. "This is a friend's apartment," the general says as if in apology, "I'm only here for the weekend." It all seems a long way from the banks of the Yalu, from those crude huts serving as brainwashing clinics, where indoctrinators worked in relays over exhausted prisoners. "If I learned anything in Korea it was not to condemn prisoners who 'confess.' But there's something more important. It's that however ridiculous this indefatigable Communist effort seems to us, we Americans tend to underestimate it. . . . We may be the most advanced nation technologically, but we are also the most politically naive."

Although the general is in uniform, it is hard in this white and gold Manhattan apartment to consider the reality of American defense; especially defense in some future time when the slow but sure falling behind the Soviet Union—not to mention racial trouble in the army and navy, acts of sabotage, anti-war sentiment, the tenfold rise in absenteeism, desertion—should have had its effect. I ask about all this. "Yes, we have suffered a decline in loyalty and faith," the general says with a slight drop in his voice. "In case of war, Americans I believe will rally, but will it be too late? People, many of them, don't want to wear uniforms any longer . . . to walk onto some U.S. campuses with a uniform on, is as much as your life is worth."

As THERE is an ideological link between the treatment of Korean war POW's and that of Vietnam POW's, so there is a historical link between this treatment and the setup of the Stalinist trials in the 30's in Russia (and the East European trials in the 50's). The

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trials of the 30's have a specific internal purpose; all dissent is to be stifled and party power is to be consolidated by a brutal repression which can immobilize the opposition. At the same time large propaganda needs are to be served; Trotsky is to be discredited, and the capitalist West is to be seen as attempting to corrupt his followers and recruit them for espionage. In Korea the propaganda demonstrations are planned to center around the germ-warfare campaign; and in Vietnam around filmed and televised news conferences and the War Crimes Tribunal in Sweden. In both cases the "bestiality" of Americans is to be publicized and beamed around the world, especially to Third World countries. To accomplish this end, extensive torture (of the kind which typified the Stalin era) is used.

One of the ironies to emerge from history is that while a Marxist would disclaim "physical and mental torture" as part of the old, sick capitalist world, and while torture was officially outlawed in Russia in 1801 under Alexander I, it later was revived under Stalin. This was in 1937 (officially confirmed in 1939 by a special coded authorization sent out from the Central Committee). Nor can the architects of the Revolution, Marx included, completely dissociate themselves from this revival. As Edmund Wilson points out in *To the Finland Station*, Marxism is future-oriented; to arrive at that "future" the Communist "must be cruel and repressive just as the capitalist has been; he, too, must do violence to that common humanity—it is a serious misrepresentation of Marx to minimize the sadistic element in his writing." Lenin is ready to support "axes," "bombs," "boiling water," "shooting on the spot," and "wholesale arrest." His ready acceptance of injustices is a reminder that in essence the great confession trials are only an extension of that "trial by the street" which he believes has the spirit of life itself. Trotsky is less relentless, but he too accepts the necessity of "barbarous methods to combat barbarism." It is upon the declared powers of Lenin and Trotsky that Stalin is to build a fortress-like state in which all human wavering and uncertainty is to be banished. "What mercy should be shown," Bertram Wolfe asks in *Marxism—100 Years in the Life of A Doctrine*, "to men who stood in the way of History and opposed her will. . . ?" By 1937 it is no longer even considered necessary to keep up pretenses for the sake of the non-Communist world, whose innocence party propagandists can now count on.

"Never mind," Stalin comments when it is suggested during the great show trials that Western public opinion may be alienated, "they'll swallow it."

I HAVE an early morning appointment at the Roosevelt Hotel with a POW returned from Vietnam. Inside the lobby is the well-known U.S. hotel atmosphere—space, impersonality, neutral furniture. Up in the elevator to a small sitting room dwarfed by a huge TV set where I am joined by a stocky man in sport shirt and slacks with blue, rather penetrating eyes and hair that is almost white. This is Colonel (formerly Captain) Kenneth North. He comments that he is ambivalent—i.e., anxious to talk about his experiences, but also anxious to get away from them; in fact he wants to leave for Cape Cod.

He says that he was shot down by anti-aircraft fire on August 1, 1966; and while the muffled city noises come in through the heavy curtains he begins to describe that day. "It was a very quiet afternoon and I was looking down on the delta, onto acres of rice paddies. When the plane was hit I thought 'this is it' but headed north into the mountains, deciding to stay with the plane, hoping I'd get away from the populated areas. But I landed in the jungle and although I was in radio contact for two hours the North Vietnamese caught up with me, probably saw my 'chute and followed that. They were armed village militia. One had a machete and he came straight for me, but another one intervened. In fact, there was a fight." He grins—"You can guess who I was rooting for"—then goes on. "They tied my arms and walked me two hours or so to the village—a pretty primitive village, no power, no water—and took me to the chief. I was treated very well, they seemed more curious than hostile, gave me food and a bath, and let me sleep under a mosquito net. There was no rock-throwing or beating with sticks . . . in fact with a little luck I felt I might have won them over, and we might all have struck south together." He laughs. "In the morning things got worse. They took me to a militia camp on the outskirts of Yen Bai where I was interrogated by an English-speaking man looking like a college English professor, you know, civilian clothes, thick glasses, certainly no laborer. He wanted me to tell where I came from, what the target was, et cetera, et cetera. They tied me up with wire." Had he been frightened? "Not so much frightened as despairing. In those initial days we lost a lot of men, though we know any number got to the ground alive." He pauses. "Most likely some were tortured to death.

"The interrogator left after a while, abandoning me to the others. This was the pattern, like he'd say 'You force me to punish you.' They didn't like the word torture. First they'd say, 'You are a criminal and must obey orders,' and they'd ask for information and you'd refuse and they'd start in."

Colonel North has clear eyes, is perhaps younger than he now looks after seven years of imprisonment. "The wire was shutting off the blood to my feet, I could look at them slowly turning purple . . . again it's psychological. They put wire around my neck and tied me to a post against an anthill. They were those small ants that bite like fire . . . they left me there for two hours. If they

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hadn't moved me, I think the ants would have taken over . . . it was bad." Was it the worst? "No, nothing was as bad as Hanoi. Here at Yen Bai there was a sort of mechanical brutality, later in Hanoi a real hatred was built up . . . we just got further and further apart."

He talks of "Heartbreak Hotel"; of days in dark solitary cells meant for Orientals of small size, cells built—ironically—by the French. "There were manacles on the wall but my ankles wouldn't fit in them . . . for seven days they took me out to interrogate me. It was easy to avoid their questions as far as military matters were concerned, because the interrogators were both naive and cocky, and they'd start telling you the answers and they had little understanding of aircraft. I'd agree and say 'Yes, you're right.' They'd torture you to find out what you didn't know, for instance, future targets. I had a rather low-key interrogator, but he lost patience and the real torture started." The only sign of nervousness on Colonel North's face comes from a slight twitch of his lips from time to time. "They put me in the ropes. . . . One of the worst times was when I was screaming and they pushed a wet plastic sponge and a chamois in my mouth and under my nose. I thought I was going to drown, it was like drowning in a cup of water. I struggled and managed to push the sponge back a bit and get air through my nose. They use nylon parachute risers on your arms and your arms roll out of their sockets. They dislocated both my arms and I passed out . . . when I woke up I was still trussed. . . . I was damaged by these torture sessions; for seven weeks there was no feeling in my arms."

As if to reassure himself, he adds: "I was strengthened by the experience. Many Americans have led a pretty sheltered life. Going through something so brutal, you don't exactly panic, but at first you wonder if you can take it . . . in the end you realize you can still live. What helps? Some kind of faith and loyalty . . . then something it's not nice to say . . . hatred. Hatred of what Communism means. Did I break? Yes . . . at the end of the seventh day I couldn't hold out. They'd been showing me statements. There was one that was fairly innocuous-sounding. I copied it. There comes a moment when you think it's that or death. Yes, almost everyone gave up in the end . . . *at least as far as I know. . . .*"

He goes on to describe the refusal of medical help by his captors until he contributed a short biography, and the effectiveness of an alternation of kindness and brutality (so that the isolated prisoner automatically adapts himself to reality and chooses life with adaptation over death by resistance). "There were heavy propaganda sessions, working with young English-speaking cadres, and some of them struck me as disillusioned. They'd make a point and I'd refute it. In the end I think I had them listening more than talking."

A QUESTION arising from accounts like Colonel North's is how the West understands indirect warfare of the kind waged so effectively by Communist regimes. The propaganda aim itself is superficial compared with the more important side maneuvers that accompany it. In the Vietnamese situation, if the first aim may seem to be to brand the Americans as "imperialist monsters," and get them out of Southeast Asia, the wider aim has been to gain the help of new "authenticators," publicists, and sympathizers, to train new cadres among American dissenters, to frighten Americans themselves. This comes home to me during a day and a night spent at Pleasantville, once a small village in the Hudson River Valley, now merging—as do so many other communities—into the urban conglomerate surrounding New York City.

Against a tranquil background the POW question intrudes again. A young son of a friend (only eighteen) announces defiantly that he "doesn't believe it." He is rather short and dark, with the currently fashionable beard, and offbeat clothing topped by a floppy purple felt hat. "What doesn't he believe?" someone asks. The huge dark eyes, seeming even more vulnerable under the unbecoming hat, blink a little as he hastens to profess ignorance. "I know nothing about it . . . I only read the *Times* on Sunday, and then only if I'm not busy." He seems proud of this anti-involvement, prouder even than of the psychedelic pictures he has been painting up in his attic room. "As for my parents," he goes on, "I don't know what *they* think, I've only heard them talking about amnesty . . . But I know that I don't agree with the POW's." With what doesn't he agree? Doesn't he think they were tortured? "I know one thing I would say." He pauses as if to collect his thoughts. ". . . If they weren't messed up in Vietnam, then they got messed up by American doctors."

I intervene to ask how they got messed up by American doctors.

"Doctors would be given orders to do this, do that," he states solemnly.

"You actually think that *American* doctors tortured the POW's, and not the North Vietnamese?"

He sounds less secure, but speaking from a half-understood medley of double-think, fantasy, propaganda handed out by the influential among his generation, he goes on firmly, "Yes, American doctors would torture and brainwash them, just to convince them that the Vietcong torture. . . ."

Three young Americans in Central Park don't give themselves over to fantasy as completely as the eighteen-year-old from Pleasantville, but (as is common in the counter-culture) share a glorification of what is foreign, and a scorn of what is American.

A snub-nosed boy with bare feet says that he "doesn't believe it" (referring to the POW's) and adds: "I think our men committed war crimes and they deserved to be held in captivity."

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A girl adds in a disgusted voice: "I think they were trying to make themselves into heroes."

Does the boy with the bare feet really think that all those prisoners manufactured their stories, and that this whole thing, even the torturing, was the fault of the U.S.? Getting more and more worked up, he answers that he is convinced that it is a put-up job and that the older generation in the U.S. are robots who believe anything. Another young man breaks in to say that he himself believes that the prisoners were tortured. "They were victims," he says, "misguided victims."

I put a direct question to the snub-nosed boy with the bare feet: "But *you* don't believe they were tortured?"

He backtracks a little. "I don't say categorically that they weren't tortured. I just don't think it's important." He rubs a beautiful silver buckle on his belt with a piece of Kleenex. "If they *were* tortured it was a matter of policy . . . I can't fault the North Vietnamese if they *did* torture."

A CONVERSATION on the phone with a psychiatrist friend, in which he suggests that the need for community acts as a catalyst in more than one human situation. "It's easy to understand how in lieu of a community, alienated Westerners might turn toward a cohesive and defined leftist creed. . . . Similarly the young in this conscious or unconscious support of the Left find themselves part of a community of their own generation. In a different way the great desire to feed the U.S. POW's into the Communist propaganda mill is also part of an attempt—opportunistic of course—to absorb *them* into the community of Communism. . . ."

This conversation makes me remember a story of the Hungarian prisons, of a Communist called Endre Havas, so shaken by the arrest of Rajk, whom he adores, that he develops a fantasy that these are not Communist police who are torturing him but rightists—and begins to shout, "Help, help, long live Stalin . . . help, help!" So the boyars, being put to death by the Oprichina, mingled eulogies of Ivan the Terrible with their cries of pain, and old Bolsheviks went to their deaths with "Long live Stalin!" on their lips. In the Korean and Vietnam wars, prisoners have attested that "they take you to the edge of death and then draw you back, and you are grateful to them." Does this sense of gratitude then help to carry a prisoner into a state of voluntary acceptance, while the weakest, confused by a combined assault of propaganda and pain, learn to identify with the source of both?

I read, far into the night, material about the Slansky trials in Communist Czechoslovakia. These trials are thought of as the last of the great Stalinist show trials. But Stalin, having learned his lesson with Traicho Kostov in Bulgaria (who retracted his confession in open court and maintained his stand throughout), sees to it that Westerners are not admitted, and that the broadcast comes from tapes. Fourteen Czechs are accused of Trotskyism, Titoism, espionage for the West, and Zionism. Eleven of the defendants are executed and three imprisoned. Of these three, two later publish books. One of them, Eugen Loebl, now a professor at Vassar, explains in his *Stalinism in Prague* that although it is Beria's men who proceed to decimate the Czech opposition by a mock trial, the interrogation itself is executed by a Russian-oriented group of Czechs and Russians. The other survivor, Artur London (at the time of arrest Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs), is tortured until he denounces his co-defendants and "confesses." His account, which describes better than most the slow hammering at the prisoner's resistances, and the way in which forced lies and a sense of guilt gradually merge into something close to a psychosis, illuminates the difference between this and the similar trials in Russia; its capacity to haunt the reader is greater—if possible—than that vast literature of tragedy from Stalin's Siberia. Gone is that dramatic Stalinesque scene in Moscow's Hall of Columns, complete with red banners, loudspeakers, floodlights, interjections from the audience and speakers giving orations that last for six hours at a stretch. In these later proceedings there is something completely denatured; the chill which emanates from these books is a sense of human powerlessness, brought on by refinements of the state's instruments of corecion. Loebl and London both describe constant admonitions to "listen to our teachers," and to be "sincere." They are to proceed with their evidence "sincerely," they are to pronounce their last statement in a tone of "sincere repentance" and so on. (Similarly Korean prisoners are urged to be "sincere." Commander Lloyd Bucher of the U.S.S. *Pueblo*—on the occasion of his confrontation with a dreadfully tortured but still living man hanging on a wall—is told, "You see why you must be sincere?" After another session he is ordered back to his cell to think "sincerely" about how Oswald was engaged by "running-dog CIA" to kill President Kennedy—"We will shoot all your men, sonabeechy, especially all insincere liars.") But these admonitions are merged with alternately harsh and kind treatment, constant reproaches, and appeals to natural human guilt. A conditioning situation has been set up which approaches the symbiotic. During the Slansky trials, in case there should be recantations, the interrogators never left the side of their assigned prisoners.

I HAVE lunch with Jerzy Wojciechowski, a Polish refugee who lectures in philosophy at the University of Ottawa, and is now en route to a philosophical conference in one of the Southerns states. Jerzy agrees that the treatment of the American POW's in North Vietnam is important as a demonstration of ideological

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tyranny of the most determined kind. (He has come by his political knowledge honestly, since his father had once been a co-founder of the Polish Socialist Democratic party of the Ukraine—the party founded by Rosa Luxemburg; and as a boy he himself had served in the underground.) I ask to what extent, in this matter of total control, Communist Russia learned from Communist China, and vice versa. "Of course China carried the ruthless Stalinist course a step further. Whereas Stalin wanted 'immediate obedience' and used terror, elements in Chinese society tended toward unification, and toward slower, more thorough methods. At least with 'non-enemies,' Mao actually made an attempt to change the thinking of whole classes and professions . . . a stupendous unremitting effort at thought reform, which began in the early 20's when experiments were carried out on captured Kuomintang soldiers.

"All this was rather different from the Cheka in Russia which was set up by a Pole, that was Dzershinsky . . . my father knew him well. He came with 'clean hands' as they say, but became a fanatic. He died very suddenly, by the way, after two hours of screaming at the opposition—just fell dead in the lobby of the Central Committee Building!" As we walk along the street after lunch, Jerzy says that Mao had suggested the key skill which lies behind the conversion treatment. "He said something like, 'You must first give the patient a shock and shout at him "You are ill!" so that he is frightened into a sweat—and then tell him gently that he needs treatment.' You can imagine that Mao was aware of the need to break the old loyalties of the intellectuals to the West —especially to America which had been their promised land."

We discuss the Russian scientist Roy Medvedev's book on the political use of psychiatry (*A Question of Madness*) and how Medvedev points out that the commitment of his brother Zhores to a psychiatric hospital heralded an escalation of the trials for "ideological sabotage." I wonder at the formalities taken. "Well, you see," Jerzy says, "it was always easier to avoid something, avoid a trial for instance. Why not? Trials lead to moral victories and to new material for *samizdat*. . . . Now even psychiatrists become jailers. It's just a further refinement. Instead of publicity there are consultations, then treatments with drugs, restraint, et cetera. Already the 'struggle' that they speak of so seriously in China seems old-fashioned . . . as for 'putting them through the ropes' as in North Vietnam, by comparison this is crude and brutal. I tell you something, the more you know about man the easier it is to influence him."

P., A RATHER idealistic friend with grayish hair and a harmonious neat-featured face, is not overly enthusiastic about my concentration on the returned POW's. "You see," he says, "I have the feeling that they have been exploited by the President and the defense department, and made into a show. . . . Besides, anyone who goes on bombing missions must be soulless and oblivious to the damage he causes." P. doubts that propaganda influences him. "Maybe I get information from people like Susan Sontag, who represents the sort of people I feel comfortable with . . . but surely the North Vietnamese aren't as cruel as we want to think."

The conversation seems to have a life of its own. P. remarks almost dreamily that Bertrand Russell was a philosopher. Yet the War Crimes Tribunal was so biased that it embarrassed even the Swedish government; Sartre and Dave Dellinger found it necessary, for instance, to tax Saburo Kugai, a Japanese professor testifying at the trial, for stating that the maps captured from U.S. pilots had hospitals marked in red as bombing targets. When asked how he knew that this wasn't done so they could *avoid* the hospitals, the professor had to admit that he had no proof either way.

"Think," cries P., "of the emotional atmosphere of the period when Jane Fonda went to Vietnam . . . shattered bodies of children and so on . . . in a war we were imposing on an innocent people. . . ." He doesn't mention that a returned POW, Commander David Hoffman, said from his bed in a San Diego Hospital that he'd been forced to appear before Jane Fonda and former Attorney General Ramsey Clark by being roped by his broken arm which was in a cast, put on a table, and having the table kicked out from under him. His actual words were, "If Miss Fonda thinks for a minute that the people she saw were able to speak freely . . . or that any deviation from the ordered script wouldn't bring instant punishment . . . then she's got another think coming."

A DINNER party with a group of astute journalists in one of those Park Avenue apartments where big windows look out onto the New York City blocklike buildings brilliant with light. The writer-hostess, small and smart in a long clinging scarlet dress, explains that she and her husband are going to mainland China; and a discussion follows about inevitable problems of freedom of movement, journalistic coverage, the language barrier, etc.

Some of those present agree that the thought of China is rousing euphoria rather than objective or critical study. One says that journalists are on the whole tougher than other travelers, since their profession automatically educates them to certain harsh realities—that is, if they are able to get a glimpse of those realities. For a moment the discussion turns to that "dream world" which Americans so often have found abroad. "After all," a tall TV director remarks, "it's been so ever since first Hawthorne and then James wrote about the 'vacuum on a foreign shore.'" "And made a very good thing of it!" jokes the hostess. The director

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ponders that with regard to mainland China, as with other little-known territories, the skeptics will eventually come into their own. "Look how it was in the late 20's and early 30's. In Hollywood they were collecting money to buy tractors for Russia; in the meantime old Gene Lyons was storing up critical thoughts. . . . Now it's the East that's arousing people's fantasies."

The smallish, curly-haired host, who has been busy with cocktails, is exhilarated that he is finally getting to Peking; and is confident that he will be able to find some of the information he needs. "Listen, I'm used to finding my way around after all. There's always a way, and if there's not you have to find one."

"Any way you look at it, it'll be hard sledding," prophesies a sports writer.

Someone else produces laughter by drawling, "You can always try the American Embassy!"

The whole American bogging-down in the great imponderables of Asia creates a confusion which projects the adventure of "going to China" as only one small episode in a vast groping attempt to "include the East." Some of the journalists present tend to believe that because events in China, Russia, North Korea, North Vietnam, etc. have shades of difference—and because there is conflict between China and Russia—the complexities of the Marxist tie which binds can be forgotten.

There seems little regard for the prisoner-pawns being moved around on a chessboard infinitely vaster than that of Vietnam. Mary McCarthy, once so astute about Russian repression, reflects something like this in her book on Hanoi. Shepherded by her carefully selected contacts, she philosophizes as to the opinions expressed by someone at the War Crimes Commission—that the pilots were brought to "repent," not by being fed lies, "or in my judgment, mysterious drugs, but by a simpler method . . . they were taken to see bomb sites." She is somehow genuinely able to believe that the North Vietnamese were "carefully distinguishing the person of the criminal from his crime, treating the fractures of the shot-down pilots with their advanced surgical skills." Actually, in an absolute parallel with the lessons of the Korean war, these shot-down pilots, except for a few "special" cases and those thought to be unproductive, had medical care (as with food, sleep, and absence of torture) doled out to them when they were willing to "cooperate." Later in her book, talking of the discovery of the bodies of friends of hers—Mr. and Mrs. Krainich of the University Medical School—in the mass graves of those executed by the Vietcong in Hué, Miss McCarthy says, "There is no way of knowing what really happened and I feel somewhat suspicious of American stories of mass graves." She adds with unashamed bias, "I should prefer to think it was the Americans, indiscriminately bombing."

This would be unimportant, were it not that blindness to the obvious recrudescence of Stalinism has become a Western pattern. While echoes of the great show trials sound from Leningrad and Vilna, from Conakry (with cries of "Judgment of the People" and pre-hanging poems by Touré), from Prague and from Moscow again (where Pyotir Yakir and Victor Krasin—after being in custody for many long months—"confess" in the accepted manner), new and better methods are being thought up to subdue; and the "lesson of the confession" (as Eugen Loebl titled a recent article) is that man under inhuman pressure will apologize for his humanity.

In the meantime the younger (as well as the older) generation in the West remains only "too human." The barefoot boy in the park can't bring himself to countenance, let alone believe, what disturbs him; the boy in the purple felt hat projects *his* disturbance upon American doctors; and on the day that I leave New York, a young would-be Maoist, apparently overcome by euphoria at the rising power in the East, and somewhat drunk at a party, tosses her long blond hair and cries, "I think China is the greatest . . . just the *greatest*!"

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Family Reunion

Leslie H. Farber

Social critics often decry the absence of ritual in our culture, noting that our hunger for ritual leads us to devise all manner of pomp and circumstance, some of it as foolish as a conclave of Shriners in funny hats, some of it as ominous as a troop of Ku Klux Klanners in hoods. In their headlong rush down this inviting ideological path, however, critics may miss altogether the multitude of pompless rituals that engage us in our ordinary lives. Not merely birthdays and holidays, but such simple festivities (or ordeals) as the evening dinner and the favorite TV program may qualify in this category.

By far the most powerful ritual to celebrate the institution of the family is the family reunion, a gathering of interconnected family units, spanning several generations, related by blood or marriage. The occasion may be a wedding, a birth, a death, an anniversary. Or the reunion may arise out of no impulse other than a mutually felt obligation that the clan should gather again. Indeed, many families have regular, scheduled gatherings, the gathering together itself providing both the occasion and the regularity.

Some years ago I attended a reunion on the occasion of my parents' 50th wedding anniversary. In my memory the event has unfortunately merged with an 8-mm movie, which I tend to confuse with my actual recollection. Still, in both the movie and my memory a cousin cradles my infant son and sings "Bill Bailey" to him. In the movie he merely mouths the song, but in my mind his voice is true and confident, not very different from what it was when he was a Dartmouth undergraduate home for the holidays with all the newest songs in his repertoire, and I was only a callow thirteen, dazzled by his sophistication and assurance. I remind myself that he has had two coronaries, three marriages. And I see his father's face hidden in his face. His father, my favorite uncle, my father's oldest brother. If I try hard I can even find my father's face somewhere in his features as I am sure he can find my own father in my features. This is but a small instance. Actually there is a profusion of small and large family resemblances to be seen in this gathering. There is something unnerving about all this resemblance, as though we all wore masks. Or as though we were science-fiction creatures all of whom developed from the same intergalactic spore.

In watching my cousin, then a man of about fifty-five, singing to my baby, reminding me of the person he had been, or seemed to both of us to have been, so many years earlier, it crossed my mind to wonder at what he was doing. Had it become his habit, at his age, to dandle infants on his knee and croon hits from the 20's to them? Would he, when he left this party, search out someone else's newborn, in order to repeat the performance? Not likely. The performance, and surely that is exactly what it was, was for me, for him. He was performing a version of himself we both remembered and could endorse as genuine, if not to this time and place, then to some other, then to history. He was identifying himself in the group portrait.

I also appear briefly in this movie (my wife and I took turns behind the camera). I appear in a manner that perhaps tends to justify its existence, for what I behold on the screen is not what I would likely have remembered. I am first glimpsed standing in the corner of the patio chatting with a young man, my nephew. My head is slightly inclined toward him as he speaks; I am looking noticeably thoughtful and attentive. Later, the party and the camera move into the house, and I may be seen sitting near my mother as she opens and exclaims and weeps over her anniversary gifts. Despite the extremely dim light of this indoor scene, it is clear that I am still looking noticeably thoughtful and attentive.

Prodded by this pictorial record, I have to acknowledge that a portion of my consciousness on that occasion was occupied with how I appeared, not merely to my nephew, or my mother, or the camera, but to the entire company. I was not dissembling—exactly. I was then and am now a thoughtful and attentive person, as befits my age, profession, and character. On the other hand, I wasn't breezing through the afternoon, looking bored if bored, wandering away if distracted—letting the chips fall as they might.

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My wife, too, turns up now and again in this movie, and she offers an entirely different dish, but clearly part of the same banquet. She is seen having a very good time, time after time, talking and laughing animatedly with a number of people, not singing, not looking especially thoughtful, but doing her own little number in her own way. "It's the jolly me," she says. "It didn't feel too bad at the time, but please don't make me look at it again." This movie, by mutual consent, is not shown often at our house.

Yet let me point out, while neither of us relishes witnessing ourselves performing these—or any—versions of ourselves, neither of us felt that he or she—or the other—falsified himself in any important way. What we were attempting—what everyone there was attempting—was to provide a sort of snapshot identity by which the company might refer to us, evaluate us, if they would (and they would, they would); a stereotype, to be sure, yet one that did not, we hoped, deliberately misrepresent our more private conditions.

This matter of stereotypes is worth dwelling on for a moment. We present ourselves and see one another as stereotypes at a family reunion not in order—or not merely—to deceive, but in order both to create and to survive the event.

As for the creation of the event: the purpose of a family reunion, after all, is not to take everyone's spiritual temperature, but to confirm this family, as a family (and through this family all families, Family itself). Naturally, the subject of the occasion is *the family,* and the most significant expression of this subject is the updating, the revising, of the Family Chronicle, for which purpose each individual must be ticked off in time and place and worldly enterprise; his accomplishments must be reviewed and measured against his earlier promise. All this may have relatively little to do with his private, subjective concerns, but the Family Chronicle does not record its members' progress—or lack of it—toward the moral life, and perhaps we should be grateful for that. It does not ask, "Are you a good person?" but "How are you getting on in the world?"; and since that is a question the world often asks us in its own many ways, it need not be considered impudent or unfair. On this great secular Day of Judgment the family seeks to chart its own worldly progress, which is the only progress it can measure or understand. The family is an entity, but it is not a person; it has no collective subjective dimension; its concern, in addition to its history, is with its survival, its prosperity—these being its rough equivalent of moral goals.

So, evaluations are in order, and evaluations are made, usually quite shrewdly, if not harshly. The stereotyping of the individual members is merely a convenience, and usually it is not rigid, but quite responsive to change. Ratings rise and fall as fortunes are made or lost, promising marriages sour and children fall from the fold, or new marriages bring new expectations and new children.

As for surviving the event, the dealing in stereotypes can be a welcome protection against what could amount to a massive personal assault. Can you imagine a houseful or yardful or banquet-hall full of family members all intent on having profound, private exchanges with one another? It could produce mass slaughter. One of the cardinal rules of conduct for the family reunion is: Don't get personal. Nothing must really happen.

Further, the "catching-up" sort of exchange that goes on provides an objectification of one's life that is by and large outside experience—or, at any rate, outside one's customary self-awareness. It may offer a convenient, even a comforting frame for one's own private story.

ONE'S private story *is* separate from the Family Chronicle—surely, at least, they are not identical. The Chronicle, that compilation of events—births, deaths, marriages, divorces, graduations, retirements, promotions, demotions, not to mention moves, accidents, diseases, crises, surprises, tricks and winks of fate—this record constitutes the family story. Few families are without their amateur archivists—those devoted chroniclers whose energetic gift for comprehensive "catching-up" is matched only by their extraordinary powers of absorption and recall. This is probably one of the crudest forms of history ever written—indeed, it is usually never written; it is an oral record, often buttressed with photographs, letters, passports, clippings, and other magical documents; it is also one of the most compelling forms of history we will ever know, for two reasons: 1) It is our first existential experience of history itself; and 2) it is not our own story, but the story to which our lives belong. It is our first experience of history as *story*—how many of us, as children, did not beg our parents, "Tell me a story about when you were little," and how many have not heard our own children repeat the plea? When this tradition of storytelling is once begun, books have a hard time competing—until the children are ready for real books; and even then, they read their books, and still ask an immoderate and unanswerable number of questions about how it was when we were they. Children are passionate historians and "storians." So are we.

Our two accounts—our own story and our role in the family story—will maintain a lively dialectic all our lives. They will seem to merge only to reassert their independence, but this they share: we can no more escape the one than the other.

If, by its stereotyping as well as by its proliferating and disturbing resemblances, the family reunion seems to oppose individuality, so does it also, again with its resemblances as well as with its ruthless Chronicle, oppose anonymity.

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When I was a boy I looked upon these reunions with sharp skepticism. Our blood tie, I would complain, was not a sufficient reason for all of us to carry on as though we had things in common —like friends, for example. My experience of the actual occasions was usually bearable—I did have some relatives of whom I was fond—but not joyous; I disliked—perhaps even feared—the judging and reckoning, and I disliked the interminable bragging of parents about their children. They would labor the large and puff up the small accomplishment, or, in the absence of accomplishment, dwell on their children's deference and devotion. A good deal of lying would be necessary to explain away failure and to exalt the minor achievement. Fortunate the parents whose children were both successful and devoted, although seldom fortunate enough to be able to resist a bit of boastful lying themselves.

What I recall most vividly, however, is that the entity of the family, with its uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, cousins, seemed to obliterate any claim to individuality, no matter how overweening the effort. In the midst of my boredom I thought I would never succeed in escaping or transcending this family, which would continue to multiply and wander even as I would. Even if I were to change my name and settle in Australia, I would eventually be found out by a third cousin who had also ventured to Australia, no doubt for identical reasons. And the one who had fled last could tell the one who had fled first how his departure had been set into the Chronicle, how often the family spoke of him, speculated about him, making him present in his absence. (One reason for the popularity of the movie *The Godfather* was its near sanctification of the family, which was seen to be larger than caste or class or culture or geography.)

For the family is, indeed, inescapable. You may revile it, renounce it, reject it—but you cannot resign from it; you are born into it, and *it* lives within and through you, to the end of your days. This may be inspiring, it may also be very annoying; in either case it is humbling.

FAMILY reunions differ from one another in mood and style (a funeral will obviously not have the same tone as a wedding), and from one family to another, but on the whole I think the similarities, surprisingly, are more striking than the differences.

On the issue of resemblances, more is at stake here than literal facial structure. Families seem to have particular styles and themes that run through them in uncanny variation and repetition, making it possible, for example, immediately to spot a family connection between two remote cousins who hardly know each other and share no physical resemblance at all. And however much the composition of the family may change, and the fates of individuals may alter, this thematic behavior seems to persist, almost as though it had a life of its own. This is particularly apparent in families where power relations are a controlling concern. Reversals and retributions of extraordinary dramatic force may occur as individuals rise to and fall from positions of power, without disturbing the thematic continuity that seems to govern the particular family. On the occasion of a family reunion it is the theme that will be apparent, not the drama, whose real events—those that led to and established a changed situation among the family members—will all have occurred offstage. As I mentioned earlier, one of the first rules of a family reunion is: Nothing must move.

This can be a hard rule both to learn and to keep. At my parents' anniversary my wife was more or less on display, since she and our baby were the newest additions to the central family, and she was meeting many of the clan for the first time. I asked her whether she had, in fact, enjoyed herself as much as she seemed to. Yes, she said, she had, except for Millie and Sam.

Millie and Sam were a married couple my parents' age—they, like my parents, are no longer living—who were members of our extended family, but who had also, accidentally, so to speak, known my wife since she was a child. She had not only a long and profound affection for them, they were important figures to her all her adult life, probably more than either of them knew. She saw them only very occasionally in those years, and much had happened since the last time they met. She had been looking forward particularly to seeing them again.

"I couldn't call off the party to be with them," she said, "so I had to be with them on the party's terms. There were no quiet empty corners we could slip into and talk in any real way, and those flying hugs and kisses and catching-up clatter just don't represent our relationship at all. We pressed each others' hands a lot, and looked into each others' eyes, and so on, but what all that amounted to was just a disagreeable cheapening of what I feel for them, which is serious, and very private and quiet, and doesn't, apparently, have a convenient public form. There I stood, with these people I loved, my arms around them, longing to say something that would be true, about me, about them, about our relation—and unable to speak a sensible word. It was painful."

Ironic though it may be, a family reunion is not an occasion that offers much scope to this major human concern, *love*, either as a personal emotion, pleasurable or not, or as a sacred duty, possible or not. Affection among members of this party may be commonplace and deep; it may also be virtually absent; these conditions will be reflected in differences in the quality, but not the necessity, of the occasion. Regardless of how instrumental affection is, or is not, in determining the shape and style of this family, it has no gov-

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erning purpose—and has even a restricted place—on the occasion of a reunion. Affection may be felt; it may be expressed, for that can be handled symbolically; but it must not actually be exercised, for the exercise of love between people is an event that moves lives, and on the occasion of this collective portrait nothing must move; it would blur the picture. What is praised here is not persons, or the relationships between persons, whatever the nature of those relationships, but the state, the condition, of relatedness itself. What is honored is not the chosen connectedness that characterizes our friendships, and indeed may prevail within our intimate families as well, but that connectedness whose reality lies entirely outside our inclination, and whose inescapability is, therefore, absolute.

So far as the occasion is concerned, I think some of the most deeply felt and cherished—and enjoyed—family reunions tend to occur at funerals. The pace of the event is slow, the mood reflective, intimate. People draw closer together to speak of the past, to frame that part of the story that holds the life that is gone. The young, especially, are instructed in the Chronicle, as their elders make fresh discoveries, new connections with their heritage. Death broods over the company, foretelling but also enhancing the lives of the living, whether they are harshly grieving or merely wondering at the eternal struggle between finality and endurance.

WHAT, we are entitled to ask, does a family reunion have to tell us about ordinary life—life, and family life?

On the surface, very little, if we are looking for correspondences, references. Daily life within that irreducible unit of willed and unwilled connection that we have learned to call the "nuclear family" differs in every important way from the experience of a family reunion.

At a family reunion all is stasis; time stands still, so that an image of the structure that exists only in time may be conceived and grasped in that stilled moment.

Family life, on the other hand, is all flow; living it is rather like a trip down a treacherous river in a small canoe; we spend a lot of time keeping the craft afloat, shooting the rapids. There are, of course, calmer passages as well, blessedly uneventful, unexpected havens of simple routine—and in these quieter periods perhaps we will merely rest, perhaps we will look around, get our bearings, mark changes in the current, note the altered features of the countries we are passing through.

If the family reunion offers us a primer of birth and aging and death, family life constitutes the workbook, or the lab manual, for the same course.

Family life is much concerned with the passage of time: from now to next spring and graduation; from now to someone's birthday, next month; from now to the meeting this weekend; from now to lunch; and from all the nows that came before and pointed to this one.

The flow of family life, with its turbulence and calm, is actually a double current of time and activity. Now and then one or the other may predominate, at times they seem quite out of phase, even in conflict. Time may be experienced as boredom, or anticipation, or change. Activity may be simply an inertia of exertion on a single spot, or it may be felt as significant movement. In any case, this flow, in which time is always passing and we are sometimes truly moving—not with it, but within it—and sometimes still, "marking time" it is said—this flow is very much part of our awareness of life together in a family. Events occur that punctuate and dramatize the flow itself. Children are born, they grow, they grow up, they go away from us toward their own lives, our own parents die, our friends die, it is growing late, it is years since we began.

What is it that we think of, when we think of ourselves and the time—and the times—that are gone? We want: to have lived honorably, to have mattered—to our time and to one another, to have had a meaning . . . we want, we want; meanwhile the potatoes are burning and the gas man is here to read the meter. What family life teaches us about time is that it goes—that what it brings or gives or permits, it also transforms or hardens or takes away. We learn that family life is a passionate daily traffic in perishables, and that what endures, in joy or grief, is seldom what we knew or chose.

Family life is personal life. The people within it play "roles" for one another, as we like to point out these days, but these roles are useful, flexible conventions (like everything else under the sun of course they can be abused); we can hide out inside them when we need relief, we can find a wealth of opportunity for expression and communication within them, and, we discover, we can transcend them altogether in moments when we reach one another deeply in one way or another. Family members talk a lot to one another and some of it is real talk. Family members move around and about in relation to one another, giving and taking their first—and thousandth—lessons in pride, anger, forgiveness, envy, betrayal, and love. A child growing up in a nuclear family learns that a human being is a creature who: is born into a family he did not choose, has needs and feelings and thoughts and ambitions—which are, or are not, filled, expressed, shared, and encouraged—and eventually becomes an independent individual, ready to address the world—and the family that nurtured him—on his own terms.

What endures for an individual is his individuality—his experience of his individuality, and that occurs in the now, connected, of course, to many other nows of personal consequence. An

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individual, inspired with subjectivity, spurred by the urgencies of personality, armed with self, single-handedly takes on time in mortal combat. Time wins, of course, but the battle may be glorious. We are all, needless to say, individuals, and most of us are the better for it.

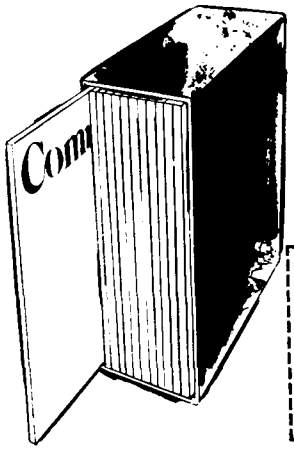
But a human being is more than this, too. There are realities to his existence that seldom penetrate his consciousness because they are not directly perceived in experience, but may be brought to awareness through metaphor. At a family reunion a person may glimpse his own life in a way that does not belong to his ordinary perceptions.

As he looks from the oldest members at the gathering, many of whom may not be present at the next reunion, to the youngest, who were not here the last time, he can conceive an image of his own life as a trajectory in time, an arc that began at one point, and will end at another, creating a tangible shape, and linking those points to a far huger but still tangible network of interconnecting arcs. That is, he sees his life as a whole, not as a series of experiences, but as a single act—a *thing,* real, objective, unique. He sees that his existence has a dimension in reality that is beyond his experience—almost, but perhaps not quite, beyond his comprehension.

He, who thought his existence was his own, belonged to him, is abruptly reeducated. His experience, which *is* his own, has taught him that living is a process of tracing on sand—that some patterns are deeper, or larger, or more beautiful than others, but that the wind and the water ultimately wash over all. Now, at this family reunion, as he beholds the great chain of generation (to which he belongs), threading its way through the present moment, linking the old to the young, the dead to the unborn, and as he sees that it contains—and is contained by—his own life, he imagines his life taking its particular place in a vast, organic, historical continuity.

In the same process by which time is constantly erasing its own surface, it is forming the deep structure that we never see—and that may be apprehended only through imagery—wherein our disappearing lives are set in stone. For, beneath the sand there is rock; the rock is shaped, is being shaped, will be shaped—by us, by our lives, by our tracings in the sand.

A human being, the family reunion teaches, is a creature who: is born into a family, lives without and within it, colors and shapes it with his being, brings to it his gifts, his acts, replenishes it with his children, and diminishes it—his final shaping—with his own death.



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The World of I. L. Peretz

Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg

IT IS customary to speak of three figures —Mendele Mokher Sforim, Sholem Aleichem, and I. L. Peretz—as the founders of modern Yiddish literature, but for those readers who must encounter them mainly through the rough lens of English translation, they are by no means equally accessible or attractive. Mendele seems permanently locked into his culture, and while translators can give us approximations of his language, they cannot yield enough of his references, allusions, and satiric thrusts to enable an alien reader to understand why he is so highly regarded in the Yiddish world. Sholem Aleichem is a universal genius whose overflow of invention and humor survives *almost* any translation. But Peretz (1852-1915) presents us with a problem. His name is known and occasionally honored, his work is little read. More "modern" in outlook and sensibility than Mendele or Sholem Aleichem, he is nevertheless the most prominent among those Yiddish writers who turned back for their materials to the half-buried past of East European Jewish life. Deliberately cultivating the legends of the Hasidic rabbis and retelling old stories that had been handed down in the Yiddish oral literature, Peretz submitted his restless mind to the enticements of a religious-folk tradition even as he was rejecting the formal systems of religious belief associated with it.

Let us be candid: except for the shrinking number of readers still at home with the culture of Yiddish, Peretz is not immediately available to the contemporary reader. At first glance—that frequent source of error—he may seem a writer of sentimental tales, folksy allegories, even obscurantist moralities. More than most writers, he can be retrieved for the literary imagination only by a return to his historical context.

I

I. L. PERETZ was born in the Polish town of Zamosc, a lively and noisy place with a multi-lingual culture. Russian troops were stationed in the town, German merchants passed through frequently. While the Peretz family, apparently Sephardic in origin, was traditionally pious, the father, a prosperous merchant, had acquired some liberal ideas and was on the way to becoming a *maskil* or enlightener. The young Peretz absorbed both the learning of traditional Judaism and the learning of modern Europe, the latter through lessons in German and Russian and an intense plunge into the secular library of a sympathetic *maskil*. "There were many-volumed novels," Peretz would write in his memoirs, "especially translations from the French of Dumas, Sue, Hugo, etc. I read them as they came into my hands, a volume 10 of Sue, followed by a volume 9 of Dumas, then a volume 3 of Hugo. . . . I devoured them just as they came." And while the Jewish community of Zamosc was fiercely opposed to the "heresies" of the Hasidim, the young Peretz sometimes would visit the *shtibl,* or little prayer house, of a local Hasidic community, "attracted by their ecstasy . . . their warmth, their shouting, their beating on the wall during the silent prayer."

Orthodoxy dominated Jewish life at the time Peretz was growing up, but it was no longer an unchallenged Orthodoxy, it could no longer claim or hold completely the moral energies of a sensitive Jewish boy. By the mid -century a struggle had begun between religious traditionalism and a range of new intellectual outlooks, some like the Haskalah, or Enlightenment, seeking to refresh Judaism through exposure to the winds of modern European thought, and others, like the socialist and that of some Zionist groups that would soon appear, frankly secularist in character and regarding Jewishness as no more than the culture of an oppressed group. In this struggle, which would persist for decades, Peretz stood at the very center, buffeted by the opposing tendencies and expressing opinions more ambivalent, certainly more complex, than could easily be grasped by ideologues on either side.

Peretz's early life—indeed, his life until middle age—is unimpressive. He seems to be drifting from one occupation, one interest, to another, as if he does not know what his true purpose in life can be. An arranged marriage at eighteen which proves to be a disaster and ends in divorce; apprentice ef-

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forts at literary composition in Polish and, half-heartedly, in Yiddish; entry into the profession of law, successfully begun but not followed through; a second marriage in 1878, this time satisfying; some forays into Hebrew poetry; employment in 1890 as a sort of census-taker, really an informal sociologist, traveling from town to town and collecting information about *shtetl* life (this experience he recorded in an early book, *Bilder fun a Provintz-Reize,* or *Pictures from a Provincial Journey,* 1891); finally a post with the Warsaw Jewish community, lasting the remainder of his life, which gave him time to write and, in effect, to become the central figure of Yiddish culture in Poland—all these are the motions and improvisations of a man trying to find his way, to discover what might stir him into an undeviating purpose.

There is similar drift intellectually. In the 1870's, as a young *maskil,* Peretz had looked down upon Yiddish as a mere "jargon," a term of contempt employed by many Jewish intellectuals. After the pogroms of 1881, which set off the first great wave of migration to America, Peretz's feeling for Yiddish grew warmer and he began to yield himself to the cultural nationalism that was sweeping the East European Jewish intelligentsia, a movement romantic in voice yet intent upon a rationalist modernizing of Jewish thought. In the late 1890's Peretz went through a socialist phase, leading to his imprisonment for several months because he had attended an illegal meeting. A decade later he would be active in the Czernowitz Yiddish Conference, a gathering in Rumania at which distinguished intellectuals tried to accord status and dignity to the "jargon" which was in fact the vital language of millions of people. And at about the same time, though never joining the recently-formed Zionist movement, Peretz expressed sympathy for the idea of a return to Palestine.

Eclectic and unsettled, he seems to have been open to almost any authentic impulse in Jewish life—except rabbinic Orthodoxy. He was not primarily drawn to program or ideology as such: "He demanded of ideas," wrote his colleague Hersh Nomberg, "what one wants of a woman, that she be seductive, radiant, and amusing, yet not insist on a wedding canopy." What interested him most of all was a reassertion of Jewish intellectual energy, a regathering of Jewish morale. He was the kind of writer who must clarify his mind and achieve intellectual assurance before he can find his literary voice.

Strict faith he had abandoned, yet it must be remembered—this is perhaps the single overriding fact in the experience of Yiddish writers at the end of the 19th century—that faith abandoned could still be a far more imperious presence than new creeds adopted. Like such Western writers as George Eliot and Thomas Hardy, he found himself enabled to draw upon traditional faiths and feelings precisely *through* the act of denying them intellectually; indeed, the greatest influence on the work of such writers is the rich entanglement of images, symbols, language, and ceremonies associated with a discarded belief.

Peretz's earliest fiction in Yiddish inclines toward the satiric-didactic sketch or, as in his *Pictures from a Provincial Journal,* the social vignette, mordant in tone, somewhat realistic in approach, but not finally devoted—he never would be—to detailed social portraiture. At first Peretz published in Sholem Aleichem's miscellany, *Di Yiddishe Folks-Bibliotek,* but the two writers, though warily respectful of one another, were temperamentally at odds and held strongly varying notions of what Yiddish literature should become. Besides, Sholem Aleichem had taken too many editorial liberties with Peretz's long satiric-reflective poem, "Monish," and Peretz had naturally resented that. In 1891 Peretz issued his own collection, *Di Yiddishe Bibliotek,* which contained literary items and pieces of popular education, and in 1894, *Yomtov Bletlakh,* in which he published some of his pungent essays calling for a cultural revival in East European Jewish life.

WHAT sort of a cultural revival? It is not always clear, since Peretz had too restive and skeptical a mind to remain content with fixed positions and was, in any case, far keener at criticism than at making positive proposals. Criticism, however, was precisely what his culture needed: the scathing attacks he wrote on the superficiality with which the newly secularized Yiddish culture took over bits and pieces of European culture, the insistence he voiced that the course of modernizing could only be achieved through indigenous means and materials. Better than anyone else, Peretz saw that the burgeoning Yiddish culture, for all its freshness and liveliness, was in danger of cutting itself off from its historical roots in the Jewish past and that, in the long run, this could only lead to a drying out and a withering away.

Peretz made his house at Ceglana 1 a mecca for every aspiring *shtetl* youth who fancied himself a Yiddish writer of the future. One such youth, I. I. Trunk, later a distinguished historian, would remember the warm yet slightly sardonic reception which, as a *yeshive-bokher* (yeshiva student) still dressed "in a long *kapote* (cloak) and traditional black serge cap," he was accorded by the now-famous writer wearing "a silk smoking jacket." Trunk brought along a high-flown story in Hebrew and Peretz offered a pungent criticism: "You think in Yiddish and translate yourself into Hebrew. . . . Why don't you write Yiddish? Doesn't it suit you . . . to write in the language of the common herd?"

Peretz was familiar with the thought of the West, at least those portions of it likely to reach the Warsaw intelligentsia at the turn of the cen-

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tury, and one strand of his creative self would always be cosmopolitan and skeptical. In his brilliant little essay, "Hope and Fear," he anticipated a central intellectual experience of our time, warning that the gods of secular progress might fail long before leading European writers would announce that their gods had indeed failed. Jacob Glatstein, himself a major Yiddish poet, has written that Peretz created "single-handed a Jewish 19th century." By this striking phrase Glatstein means that Peretz succeeded in yoking together the worldly culture of Europe with the religious traditions of the Jews, or, more precisely, that Peretz rediscovered and refined the Jewish tradition so that, on its own, it could slip into the era of intellectual modernism which begins in the mid-19th century. To bring together the folk voice of the past with a vision of Jewish renaissance; to place, in Glatstein's words, "the inner nature of the Jewish spirit upon the world calendar of the 19th century" by unearthing "the finest Jewish treasures and illuminating them with the first electric light"—this was Peretz's achievement.

His work spread across several genres: the drama, the essay, the short story. Though his plays have been produced on the Yiddish stage, they are primarily reflective literary works, *Di Goldene Keyt* (*The Golden Chain*, 1909) focusing on a Hasidic rabbi's determination to prolong the Sabbath into the seven days of the week so as to make all of life a sacred celebration, and *Baynakht oyfn Altn Mark* (*At Night in the Old Market*, 1907) creating a symbolic panorama of Jewish life in Poland that brings together past and present, the living and the dead. Peretz's essays remain wonderfully fresh, full of intelligence and a certain impatience too, composed in a pithy and nervous Yiddish, hard to translate because free of those "literary" elaborations most translators like to indulge in. What Peretz did as essayist was to mold for himself a distinctive form: brief, pungent, stripped to the essence of his matter, totally different from the slow-footed winding pace of earlier Yiddish writing.

But it is, of course, as a writer of short stories that he is best remembered. Like Hawthorne in America and Yeats and Synge in Ireland, Peretz cut a path to a literary future by falling back upon a native past. Among the Warsaw Jewish intellectuals, writes the Yiddish literary critic S. Niger in his definitive study of Peretz, there had developed during the 1880's and 1890's a strong interest in all forms of Yiddish folk creativity. The folklorist, Judah Leib Cahan, had begun to collect the texts and notations of old Yiddish folksongs. Other Yiddish writers were coming to recognize the diversity, richness, and even strangeness of the East European Jewish past as a source for their fiction.

This "national-romantic direction," as S. Niger calls it, prepared the way for Peretz's major work. At literary gatherings which took place on Saturday nights in Peretz's house, recalls Hersh Nomberg, "we used to sing folksongs. . . . In these songs of love and longing, joy and pain," the writers and intellectuals grouped around Peretz found support for their persuasion that the East European Jews, far from being "on one hand a Chosen People, elected, pure spirit, and on the other crippled, without feeling for nature, for simplicity, love, beauty, and poetry," were actually "natural, healthy human beings." Such persuasions are almost always likely to contain some exaggeration, insofar as they deny the spiritual and psychic costs of historical oppression; but it seems inevitable that they arise at the point when national minorities begin to assert themselves and press to reinforce their morale. The point that Peretz and his friends were trying to make about the experience of the East European Jews is not so very different from the point that writers like Ralph Ellison have in recent years been trying to make about the experience of American blacks: that even in the midst of oppression there has arisen a rich and various culture which cannot and should not be reduced to the terms of oppression.

In any case, this was a central persuasion behind Peretz's work, or perhaps more accurately, a dominating hope. Shortly before 1910 he published two volumes of stories—the major work of his career—called *Khasidish* (*Hasidic*) and *Folkstimmlikhe Geschikhten* (*Folk Tales*) in which he embodied that persuasion or hope in works of the imagination.

II

Concerned with the reconstitution of the Jewish community at the moment it seemed to be turning from the Divine Presence to a secular European outlook, Peretz wished to find mundane equivalents for those values that the sacred tradition could no longer sustain. His vision of "the good Jew," as it emerges from his writings, is similar in tone and quality to the late-19th-century idea of "the good European." Peretz spoke for a Yiddish version of that liberal humanism and secular idealism which characterized the best minds of Europe at the end of the 19th century. In doing so, however, he sharply attacked all tendencies toward assimilationism among Jews, insisting that the Jews bring to world culture their own spirit, their own uniqueness, as an equal among equals. That restlessness, that fever, that coil of problems, which we associate with the 19th century, Peretz brought into Yiddish life and literature. But he brought them, in the main, not through a diffusion of contemporary ideas, nor through his role—a role every Yiddish writer had to undertake—of popular educator. He brought the qualities of the 19th century into Yiddish literature by going backward into the East European Jewish past.

In his earlier and weaker stories Peretz faced

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both ways: outward, toward the themes and methods of European literature, and inward, toward the heritage of the folk. As he developed his distinctive style, he broke away from the methods of Mendele and Sholem Aleichem. Peretz writes with the plastic rapidity, the transparent nervousness characteristic of a great many modern authors. He brought, as Niger remarks, "impact and hurriedness into the structure of the Yiddish story: short-breathed, staccato, and aphoristic prose." The rhythm of Mendele and even Sholem Aleichem is the rhythm of a sleepy *shtetl;* the rhythm of Peretz, even when writing about Hasidic rabbis and old Yiddish legends, is the rhythm of Jewish Warsaw.

In the earlier stories, often colored by feelings of social indignation over Jewish suffering and the decay of Jewish communal life, Peretz comes closer to individual characterization than most of his Yiddish contemporaries. He focuses upon what might be called *typical individuals,* though not yet the fully individualized characters that 19th-century European literature sought to achieve. His people stand somewhere between the archetype and the fully formed individual: a hopeless youth, as in "The Mad Student," torturing himself with his inadequacy, a pair of young lovers dreaming of happiness in a dismal Gorki-like cellar, as in "The Cellar."

In Peretz's later and stronger stories he reworks folk and Hasidic materials in a way that appears to be folklike but is actually the product of a sophisticated literary intellect. The old properties, in their naiveté and charm, remain: Heaven is envisioned as a homely *beth din* or rabbinical court with a literal scale of justice, the legends contain "palaces" which testify to a poverty of imagination, or better, the imagination of poverty, and God Himself speaks out in anguish and impatience as if He were no more than a rabbi among rabbis. But together with the simple backgrounds and unadorned story lines, there is what Glatstein calls "an additional dimension of mind," with the "flavor of a modern story-teller added to their biblical clarity, so that they become neo-biblical moral fables." As he retells and deepens these stories, Peretz, the writer who measures the distance between himself and the pieties to which he turns back, is always, though unobtrusively, in sight, sometimes through his rearrangement of materials, sometimes through no more than an ironic phrase at the end of a story. His use of Hasidic materials has been excellently described by Isaac Rosenfeld:

> The pragmatic stamp is on every word. The tone of wonder is given by the intelligence and not by the Hasidic awe it represents. Peretz shares the faith of which he writes but at a considerable remove, and it does not rest for him in the objects or efficacies of the Hasidic mystique, nor does it express a natural piety of utterance, as with prayer; his is a borrowed piety, taken from the intelligence, adept at translating one mode into another.

In the end Peretz must always part company with the Hasidic wonder-workers and speakers of wisdom, for he cannot really share their oneness of vision, he can only offer variants and versions, completely honest in their approximation, which seek to break open the envelopes of doctrine in order to reach some fundamentals of wisdom. Accordingly, to quote Rosenfeld again, Peretz "took the Hasidic ecstasies not as ultimate things, visions in the midst of appearances . . . but rather as the immediate phenomena in the radiance of this world." Speaking from within the Yiddish milieu, S. Niger came to similar conclusions: Peretz had no desire to idealize the actual Hasidic rabbis, "he sometimes made fun of them, having only a slight relationship to Hasidism in the narrow religious sense," and he consciously chose elements of the Hasidic experience as "a medium for crystallizing his own thoughts and feelings." If, continues Niger, "Peretz in some sense became 'a Hasid,' it was only after having transformed Hasidism according to his own vision" (in Yiddish an untranslatable coinage, he *farperetzt* Hasidism).

There is a Peretz story, "If Not Higher," which provides a neat parable of his own literary situation. A skeptical Litvak, probably an oblique version of Peretz himself, expresses doubt over the goodness of the Hasidic rabbi of Nemirov. He puts the rabbi to the test, secretly watching as the rabbi gets up early on a frosty morning, goes to the forest to chop wood, and then, disguised as a peasant, brings it to a poor widow whose cottage he warms and cheers with a lively fire. The inner anecdote about the rabbi Peretz took from a familiar Hasidic story, told in many variations, about Rabbi Moishe Leib Sussover; but the encasing figure of the Litvak is Peretz's addition. After seeing the good deed performed by the rabbi, the Litvak becomes his disciple—a special kind of disciple, for when the ordinary followers of the rabbi say that their master ascends to heaven at the time of the Penitential Prayers, the Litvak adds quietly, "If not higher." The Litvak sees the saintliness of the Hasidic rabbi as a *this-worldly* saintliness; he comes to adore the rabbi as a moral hero rather than an agent of God. Peretz does not actually link himself to the world of the Hasidic rabbi, he merely looks into it—with wonder and admiration, but still from a distance.

The most poised and complicated of Peretz's stories dealing with Hasidism is "Between Two Peaks," in which the phalanxed ranks of rationalism and enthusiasm, *Misnagdim* and Hasidim, are aligned through two formidable protagonists and at the end Peretz can only hope for a measure of patience, or tolerance, but not for a genuine reconciliation. In this story there is a recognition of irreconcilables, an awareness that some issues

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of mind cannot be dissolved by a mere shuffling of words. Yet, if the pointer wavers a trifle in any direction, it is toward the warmth and democratism of the Hasidic view, as when the Bialer rabbi says to his *Misnaged* antagonist: "Teacher, tell me! What do you have for the people? For the simple craftsman? For a woodchopper or butcher? The ordinary man? Most of all—for a man who is sinful? Teacher, what do you give to those who are not scholars?"

From Hasidism Peretz tried to extract its life-strength, but without finally crediting the source. Peretz found there, in Glatstein's words, "what Christianity often claims for itself: sympathy for the lowest classes, for the silent and abject—the spirit of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. He did not need to read anything into Judaism, he read it *out*, from the depths of our moral existence." He wanted, in short, to discover in Hasidism unbreakable qualities of Jewish strength, and he did so with enough ironic self-awareness to recognize that even if his attempt were doomed to intellectual failure, precisely in the failure might lie its literary reward.

III

WHAT kind of stories did Peretz write? It is not easy to answer this question, since, to our knowledge, there is nothing quite like his Hasidic and folkloristic stories in Western literature. Perhaps the closest comparison —admittedly, not very close—is to be made with the stories of Hawthorne, also composed out of a quasi-allegorical intent, a heretical moral probing based on a lapsed religious orthodoxy, and some half-hidden, even sly touches of cleverness. Perhaps, too, there is a shade of comparison worth making with some of Kafka's shorter pieces. But in their essential qualities Peretz's stories seem to us unique: they have few points of similarity with the fictions we are likely to know in modern Western literature.

In its oral legends, anecdotes, miracle stories, and compressed moralities, the East European Jewish culture compressed, sometimes froze, its essential view of the world, its underlying spirit of distinctiveness. There are tales of the rare wisdom of rabbis, tales of rabbis bending from mere wisdom to a rarer goodness, tales of exemplary modesty, tales of outwitting enemies, tales of suffering and martyrdom; but also happier ones, tales of celebration, tales of purity, tales of the kindliness of the prophet Elijah as guardian of outcasts and the poor. These tales are completely imbedded in the culture, and scholars have had no difficulty in locating at least some of the sources and models for Peretz's work. Rarely do these tales go or seek to go beyond the limits of Jewish sensibility: they are at ease with their own assumptions, *as Peretz, in retelling them, is not*. Through the sociability of anecdote, a communion in which stories are exchanged as if they were gifts, the East European Jews maintained the continuity and coherence of their history.

Peretz took these rudimentary but sturdy anecdotes and retold them through a range of strategies. There is little physical description, little provisioning of the social scene, and little effort at the psychic delineation of characters. The physical world is taken for granted—what matters is moral discovery, spiritual action, the location of hidden weaknesses in the soul, the search for new sources of strength. A few figures reappear in a number of the stories: for instance, Berl the tailor, a characteristic East European Jew, rebellious against God in his younger years and accepting in his later, but hardly individualized or rendered with the depth of, say, Sholem Aleichem's Tevye. There is also Rabbi Levi-Yitzkhok, the most tender and humane of all the Hasidic rabbis, advocate for mankind before the gates of heaven; but he too appears in his typicality, we neither know nor need to know more about him than is required by a single line of action. Finally, Peretz stakes all on the anecdote and its unraveling of implication.

Sometimes, when moved by the charm or pathos of the original anecdote, Peretz changes very little —as in the story, "The Conjuror," which preserves almost intact the original folk sentiment of gratitude and awe at the arrival of the prophet Elijah bringing help to the poor at Passover, or in "Devotion Without End," where modes of love are blended into a pure act of self-sacrifice. It would be a depressing kind of sophistication that disabled us from appreciating the inherent loveliness of such tales, even when they are not speckled by Peretz's irony. As he renders them, Peretz uses an utterly simple, unadorned, and transparent prose, so as to efface his own presence.* At other times, as in the story, "Three Gifts," Peretz allows the legendary material to unfold in its own right, and then, at the very end, there occurs a sentence crushing in its irony: after the three gifts of selfless martyrdom have been delivered to heaven, "the Eternal Voice declared, 'Truly beautiful gifts, unusually beautiful. . . . They have no practical value, no use at all, but as far as beauty is concerned—unusual.'" This concluding sentence can make the head reel; it comes as a shock of dissociation, perhaps despair, regarding the very purities of martyrdom Peretz has celebrated. At still other times, as in "The Shabbes Goy," a sardonic assault on traditional rationales for Jewish passivity, Peretz puts a heavy imprint of his own sensibility on the story.

Almost always, however, Peretz's telling or retelling is notable for its tact, with the perspective of ironic complication clearly separable from the

* Most translations of Peretz, and even the artful retellings by Maurice Samuel in his book on Peretz, *Prince of the Ghetto*, do not sufficiently trust to the bareness of his language, but feel obliged to add various niceties of decoration.

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anecdote itself, and often demurely tucked away in no more than a turn of phrase at the end of the story. What we have, then, in these versions of traditional material, is the past recaptured, the past untampered with, the past radically altered and recreated, in an ascending line of difficulty and ambivalence; so that for all their thinness of narrative line and fragility of substance, the Hasidic and folk tales yoke together Jewish past and Jewish present in a bond of tense affection.

In the main, the voice dominating these stories is ironic, ambivalent, skeptical, a modern voice that knows enough not to be content with being merely modern. The skepticism is sharpest in Peretz's single most famous story, "Bontsche Schweig," in which this archetypical *klayn menshele,* little man, whose life contained little of either good or evil,* evokes from the heavenly prosecutor "a bitter laugh," as if shamed before the paltriness of most human desire. Peretz—and here he does seem a little like Kafka—touches in this story on one of the major themes of modern literature: the radical, hopeless incommensurability between morality and existence, the sense of a deep injustice at the heart of the universe which even the heavens cannot remedy.

There are other stories, like the wonderful "The Hermit and the Bear," or "A Pinch of Snuff," or "Motl Prince," in which the thought is revealed through the tonality of Peretz's voice, that sharp *klugshaft* or *khokhme,* Yiddish terms roughly invoking what we mean by cleverness and wisdom, which his readers would have immediately apprehended—and if not, so much the worse for them. Here the point of a story depends on a twist of dialectic, a seemingly casual turn of action or reflection: it is Peretz's mind in its relation with the Jewish tradition that provides the moral drama. In a story like "Joy Beyond Measure," where the Lord of the Universe trades the entire world to Satan in order to save the Hasidic Rabbi Levi-Yitzkhok, we are left with troubling enigmas: is this a trade of which Levi-Yitzkhok would have approved? What is the implied meaning that Peretz would bring to bear through the charm of the story?

In the Hasidic and folk-like stories we find, then, a whole range of perspectives and tones, in their sum almost the totality of Jewish response to the Jewish situation. At their best, Peretz's stories ask to be read as "wisdom stories," pieces of fiction that evoke pleasure through a tacit engagement of mind, through oblique touches of cleverness, insight, commentary, through a sly negotiation of truth. What one hears, or overhears, in these stories is the Jewish mind at a certain point in its historical development, the Jewish mind engaged in self-reflection, self-argument, self-criticism, but most of all, self-discovery. The "wisdom story" is a fiction in which the pleasure resides not merely, perhaps not even mostly, in the matter itself, but rather in the conduit of argument that is established between the mind of the writer and the mind of the reader as both reflect —with the typical Jewish gesture of two fingers of one hand striking the palm of the other—on what the story can yield. It is a kind of fiction, to twist Robert Frost's remark about poetry, that begins in delight and ends in wisdom.

* Peretz, who knew something about Nietzsche, had an evident horror before the idea of moral vacuum.

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That Old-Time Religion

James Hitchcock

DEVELOPMENTS in American popular religion in the past five years seem designed to confound anyone's confidence in his own prophetic powers. All our social sciences, our vast accumulation of data, our frenzied and persistent analysis of our "situation" (practically unparalleled in earlier societies) do not seem on the whole to have made us surer or wiser about what the future has in store.

Most badly shaken has been what might be called the rationalist-humanist understanding of Western history. In this view the development of Occidental culture has been, in modern times, a gradual movement away from what is "backward," "primitive," "superstitious," or "sacral," toward the growing domination of rationality, the scientific and empirical spirit, an easy secularity, and man's sense of control over his own destiny.

The most naive version of this, formulated first in the Enlightenment, has inevitably undergone numerous refinements. The progress of reason is recognized as not steady and uniform but subject to frequent if temporary setbacks. It has come to be accepted that religion will never die out, that humanity is in a sense incurably religious, but that the nature of religious belief will change drastically, chiefly in that religion will be recognized as "true" only in a poetic or metaphorical sense. The potential appeal of "irrational" movements is acknowledged as something to be guarded against. Nonetheless, it has been generally assumed among educated Westerners that the residue of "primitive" culture has been slowly eroding away. There is no longer anything regarded as sacred, neither age-old moral codes, the family, personal privacy, stable self-identity, nor biological integrity (threatened now by the possibility of sex changes, lobotomies, cloning, artificial insemination, and a host of other technical accomplishments). The scientific future is seen to have potentialities for evil as well as good, but on the whole the view persists that humanity has no choice but to adjust itself to such a future while at the same time trying to control it.

Perhaps the greatest flaw in this view is the failure to recognize that "primitivism" is not merely a residue from the past stubbornly refusing to die but something repeatedly stimulated and resuscitated within the bosom of rational culture itself. It is kept alive and revitalized by precisely those things which aim to bring "progress." Not only do people react against the excesses or inadequacies of rationality, but the forms of rationality themselves provide access to the primitive. So long as we have libraries and books, films and records, anthropologists and archaeologists, museums, schools, and game reserves, imaginative techniques for understanding alien cultures and mentalities, what is primitive and irrational will never be entirely lost and will be a permanent part of the cultural landscape. Epidemics of willed archaism can break out at any time.

The most obvious current instance is of course the "religious revival" which includes such diverse but ultimately related phenomena as the Jesus Freaks, neo-Pentecostalism, American-Indian religion, Asiatic systems of meditation, gurus, astrology, and devil-worship. That such movements should exist in an age of exceptional anxiety and apparent social breakdown is not surprising. What is surprising is that they should take primary root among young sophisticates, those who only a few years ago gave every evidence of having been thoroughly secularized, of having liberated themselves from every taboo and also from every vestige of sacred authority.

In all probability none of these movements will survive in any significant form beyond a few years. In this respect, at least, there will almost certainly be a "return to normalcy" long before 1980. Yet the failure of these specific expressions of religiosity will not obliterate the obscure needs which gave rise to them.

Meanwhile, as many commentators have noticed, this religious revival has not worked to the benefit of the established churches, whose membership and apparent vitality continue to decline. The failure of institutional religion does not, necessarily, lead to a deepening secularism but often to an even more intense and extravagant religiosity. Religiously inclined souls seek elsewhere for the spiritual nourishment they sense the churches cannot provide, and the churches decline even more as their leaders perceive they are failing in their appointed tasks.

A perceptive analysis of this syndrome has come from an unexpected source—a liberal Methodist minister and official of the National Council of Churches, Dean M. Kelley, who has asked *Why the*

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*Conservative Churches Are Growing.** Noting what appears to be almost an exact correlation between the openness, ecumenism, tolerance, and relevance of a denomination and its numerical decline, Kelley speculates that in fact the liberal churches are dying. They have lost any clear sense of purpose, as they seek to relate themselves to a wide variety of human problems and situations, and they lack the power to attract very many new members or hold the ones they already have. In the later 60's the major American Lutheran bodies, the Episcopalians, the United Methodists, the three major Presbyterian groups, and the Congregationalists (now part of the United Church of Christ) all declined perceptibly in membership, after having grown steadily almost since Colonial times. The numerical decline seems to have been accompanied, in most churches, by a concomitant weakening of vitality, massive identity crises among the clergy, etc. There are few signs of reversal.

Kelley constructs a table in which denominations are ranked according to their propensity for exclusiveness or ecumenism, beginning at one extreme with the Black Muslims, closely followed by Jehovah's Witnesses, and ending on the other with Ethical Culture and the Unitarian-Universalists. For the most part those on the "exclusivist" side have been experiencing numerical growth and apparent strong commitment from their members, while those on the other side are in trouble. In the middle is the Roman Catholic Church, which, as Kelley notes, made a remarkable leap from exclusiveness to openness in a few years' time. In 1969 it suffered its first recorded net membership loss in this century in America, and since then has made only a slight recovery. Its flow of converts has practically dried up, it has suffered a massive loss of priests, nuns, and brothers, and the number of recruits for these same offices are few.

Basically, in Kelley's view, churches thrive or decline to the degree that they provide their members with a sense of life's meaning, a way of making ultimate sense of experience. Meaning, however, is generally perceived as specific and exclusive of other possible meanings. A church which appears to tolerate diverse and even contradictory views on basic moral questions, for example, is likely to convey the impression that it has no truth to offer. Although conventional wisdom holds that a church which is tolerant, inclusive, and non-dogmatic will appeal to modern man, the facts indicate that such churches have a steadily weakening appeal, which in Kelley's view stems from their having nothing very compelling to say. A church deeply involved with social reform, for example, may be admirable from a moral point of view, but there are plenty of specialized secular organizations which serve the same purpose.

In addition to teaching a specific and forceful message, a church, it would seem, should also make hard demands on its members. Kelley notes that the "successful" churches are those with strict standards for converts, stiff requirements for members (many Mormons, for example, spend two years as missionaries at their own expense), readiness to censure and expel, a rigorous moral code, etc. A religion tends to have meaning for people insofar as they invest themselves in it; part of what they seek in a church is precisely a discipline which will prod them to do things they might not do otherwise.

Kelley recognizes the irony of his own position because his specialty at the NCC is social justice, and he has arrived at his conclusions somewhat reluctantly. He also perceives the gloomy implications of his thesis—the "successful" churches are precisely those whose members are likely to be intolerant, to manifest a high degree of anti-Semitism, for example. He has limited himself to setting forth the problem, however, and leaves the churches with the dilemma of either continuing to pursue a worldly "relevance" which ultimately turns out to be loss of identity or reaffirming character at the risk of becoming fanatical and intolerant. There are perhaps happy middle grounds, but it appears that as yet no church has found them.

THE fact that modernization not only weakens traditional belief but may in some ways also strengthen it is perceived by Kelley in his observation that an inhospitable culture is not a sufficient explanation for a religion's decline, because truly successful religions thrive on opposition. They create their own plausibility as a substitute for that of the culture which surrounds them.

Nowhere is that principle more amply borne out than in a recent study of nine major American evangelists currently enjoying prodigious and apparently growing successes.† When Dean Kelley discusses the conservative churches, he means primarily such groups as the Southern Baptists, the Mormons, and the Jehovah's Witnesses. James Morris, however, reminds readers of the immense outreach of certain religious leaders who have only tenuous ties with any established church but whose use of radio, television, direct mailings, books, and records gives them regular access to tens of millions of persons. Oddly, although Morris does not make this point, the preachers with the old-fashioned messages have most effectively exploited the modern media of communications, even as the liberals in the mainline churches regret their own failure to do the same.

Herbert W. Armstrong, one of Morris's preachers, relates that as far back as the 30's he discovered that many persons will not listen to a preacher except over the radio, and will also accept from the radio messages they would reject if offered them from a pulpit. This precocious curbstone McLuhanism is an insight into American religion which needs to be analyzed more fully.

Morris's account is one more chapter in our growing awareness of the complexity of popular culture. It is clear that many who hang on the revivalists' words

* Harper & Row, 184 pp., $6.95.

† *The Preachers*, by James Morris, St. Martin's Press, 418 pp. $8.95.

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(there are countless preachers not mentioned in this book) are in some sense "alienated," but it is not at all clear what the sources of their trouble are. No infallible popular wisdom protects them from demagogues, charlatans, and fanatics.

There was, for example, A. A. Allen, a "reformed" alcoholic, who persuaded his followers he could raise the dead to life, and then had to warn them against sending him corpses to pray over. His associates beat up newsmen, he built up a substantial financial empire, and when he died in 1970 the San Francisco coroner gave acute alcoholism as the cause. Oral Roberts attracts long lines of hopeless cripples, many of whom fail even to feel the healer's hand on them before he flies away in his private plane with the day's collections. At his Arizona retirement village residents pay a "sponsorship" of between $10,000 and $28,000, but the gift carries with it no rights of ownership, and those who die or become ill are quickly removed from their quarters.

Reverend Ike, a black preacher in Harlem, has a "blessing plan" whereby his followers promise to make a regular payment beyond what they can afford, in full expectation that God will return the money in some unexpected way. Carl McIntire has for over forty years fanatically promoted every right-wing cause and has waxed hot and cold in his anti-black, anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic opinions. Billy James Hargis remains an apparently powerful, if temporarily muted, influence for most of the same causes. That a populist *Fuehrer* might emerge from such ranks is not at all implausible. (At the same time there are some odd departures from the general pattern. H. W. Armstrong, for example, is an exponent of British Israelism, which means he regards the Anglo-Saxon peoples as the descendants of the ten Lost Tribes. As such he is obsessively anti-German and regards fascism as more dangerous than Communism.)

Two of Morris's gallery gain at least his mild approval—Kathryn Kuhlman, because she devotes much of her income to charity, and Billy Graham who, despite his ambiguous relationship to the White House, also accounts scrupulously for his finances and turns the other cheek to his critics. (His severest critics are other evangelists like McIntire and Hargis.) Morris reports without comment a theory that Kathryn Kuhlman may heal through ESP. Her operation differs from that of other healers because she does not touch individuals and proclaim them cured but simply waits until persons scattered in the audience announce that they have been made well. Among those having made the claim are some professed nonbelievers, also a contradiction of the classic pattern in which faith is a prerequisite for a miracle. The accounts of Graham and Kuhlman raise a question about Morris's principle of selection. His typical preacher appears to be greedy, cunning, and megalomaniacal. Is this then a fair sampling of the breed?

The popularity of healers illustrates the dilemma posed by Dean Kelley. Miraculous healing obviously has warrant in the New Testament and the Christian tradition, yet the modern churches are chary of it and embarrassed. Hence it has become the preserve of some rather dubious characters. Belatedly the respectable churches have taken a cautious interest in it. Similarly, the form of religious enthusiasm known as Pentecostalism (direct inspiration of the individual by the Holy Spirit), after being regarded as ludicrous for seventy years, has recently become an important force in Episcopalianism, Lutheranism, Roman Catholicism, and other mainline churches. In their concern to be relevant, these churches are not only chasing after the secular culture but also after the successful religious fringe groups. There is doubtless a law by which the suppression for a long time of some basic religious tendency insures its explosive resurfacing at some future time.

ALTHOUGH Morris's account of his preachers is engrossing, an even more useful, if obviously more difficult, task would have been an account of their followers, who remain very much in the background. In one respect they seem to fit Dean Kelley's hypothesis—they are attracted to men who evince not the slightest doubts about their messages and who make demands on their followers. However, the demands appear to be primarily financial. Other than that it is difficult to see how being a follower of Carl McIntire, Billy James Hargis, or most of the others carries with it any particular obligations or imposes any special way of life. Billy Graham, whom Morris seems to exempt from the general charge that evangelists are money-hungry, is criticized by some fundamentalists because he sends his converts back to their own churches, which may be liberal or modernist. (It has also been claimed that as many as one-third of those who come forward at Graham rallies leave false names and addresses with his staff.)

What is it then that appeals to people in religions whose primary purpose seems to be to separate them from their money? It seems likely that only a rather small minority have any need of a miraculous cure. Most of Morris's preachers play on people's anxieties about the political, spiritual, and economic problems of American society, but their diagnoses and their remedies are usually vague and confused (in comparison with the John Birch Society, for example). A remarkable number of prominent evangelists are native or adopted sons of Oklahoma. Why not Georgia, Mississippi, or Texas? In their analyses of fringe religious movements, sociologists lean heavily on the theory that economic and social deprivation are compensated for in extreme and eccentric piety. This seems true of the preachers themselves, most of whom had poverty-stricken childhoods and, often enough, materially unrewarding early ministries as well. But their supporters are at least affluent enough to keep the cash coming, and they include substantial businessmen.

Altogether it seems likely that

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Morris's preachers speak to a religious subculture beyond and beneath the conservative constituency which Dean Kelley talks about, a constituency about whom little is known and less is understood. American religion is a more various and complicated phenomenon than is ordinarily perceived in discussions of liberals vs. conservatives or Protestant-Catholic-Jew.

Kelley's major point, borne out in the evidently thriving ministries of most of Morris's subjects, greatly complicates the question of whether Americans are becoming more or less religious. What does seem clear is that most conscious efforts to modernize religion have negligible or even negative effects in preserving the vitality and influence of the churches. Religion may in fact be growing but its forms may increasingly be those of the "fringe" movements, not only as represented by old-time revivalism but by the numerous esoteric groups now enjoying favor among college students and other sophisticates.

Ironies stand out all over the current religious terrain, and "extreme" sectarians in some ways have a right to feel they have been dealt with cavalierly by the established churches. Enlightened clergy who condemn the fanatical sectarian spirit in religion sometimes show a remarkable willingness to baptize it in politics. Fundamentalist beliefs are dismissed as absurd and incredible, but avant-garde clergy have been at some pains to "understand" the new occultism and the new mysticism. The sophisticated mind has the tools to validate anything it wants to, and when movements like fundamentalism are placed beyond the pale it is not always because of their intrinsic merits or demerits.

In religion, as in politics, a principled liberalism with strong roots in tradition appears to be in general disarray, while radical innovation has largely discredited itself. But here as elsewhere, the decline of established institutions as fringe groups prosper cannot be an altogether hopeful sign either for religion or for society.

Theater

O'Neill Reconsidered

Jack Richardson

I FIRST saw *Long Day's Journey into Night* in Paris. The time was the late 50's and some sort of international theater festival was being put on by the French government, the purpose of which was, I believe, to bring together productions that were currently on the stages of various countries and treat them to a month or so of multi-lingual repertory. East Germany displayed its *Berliner Ensemble* in a work by Brecht; England sent over a tepid Old Vic production of a Shakespeare comedy; Italy dusted off Pirandello; Spain sent an adequately morose interpretation of Lorca's *Blood Wedding*; and Ireland, I recall, with an accompanying coy program note that explained that not all Irish drama had to do with poets and revolutionaries, offered something about an adulterous furniture salesman that made one hanker for the gunmen and speechmakers.

National pride was involved in all this, of course, not least among the French who, since they had no play of their own in the festival, used the occasion to make condescending judgments about the quality of these alien efforts and to insinuate their superiority in theatrical matters. They were particularly harsh on O'Neill, finding *Long Day's Journey into Night* overlong, overblown, and, in its pretensions to tragedy, overwhelming. At that time, I had never seen an O'Neill play on the stage, but those that I had read—*Desire under the Elms, Mourning Becomes Electra, The Hairy Ape, Marco Millions, Strange Interlude*—made me suspect that, even though the Paris critics were a noisome group whose critical abilities generally went no further than deciding whether the new Anouilh comedy was a *pièce rose* or a *pièce noire,* they were probably right in their estimate of America's contribution to their festival.

Nevertheless, I went to see the play, mainly because I had heard that Jason Robards, Jr., whom I had not seen as Hickey in *The Iceman Cometh,* was giving another fine performance as a dark, driven, desperate O'Neill spirit. I was not disappointed; Robards was excellent, as were Frederic March and Florence Eldridge. But it was not the acting that made those nearly four hours of theater memorable, it was O'Neill. All the fury and anguish, all the vital agony of living, which had been dissipated in his earlier plays by undigested bits of philosophy and unearned attempts at lyricism, had this time been given clear, hard outlines. Perhaps because the Tyrones had been constructed around personal remembrance, they were freed from the tendentiousness that fettered so many O'Neill characters, and the terrible truths they told to each other were not statements about life but embodiments of it. They were released also from the need to speak to each other in the fustian vernacular of a Hairy Ape or, like Lazarus, in cloudbursts of grandiloquence. When they argued, teased, cajoled, confessed, and complained, they did so in precise, rich human speech that was colored just enough by the dramatist's art so that it remained both unobtrusive and remarkable. Having overcome the need to prove himself a thinker and poet, a fuzzy combination of Shaw and O'Casey spiced with a bit of Nietzschean suffering, O'Neill was free to be what he superbly was: a dramatist of courage and force who understood very well how to construct the tensions and rhythms of a play so that it

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becomes infused with crude theatrical life and capable of sustaining the needs of the singular vision that gave it birth.

I left the theater elated but uneasy. Had I been wrong about O'Neill's earlier works, or lacked the imagination to see that what looked stiff and contrived in print might find its natural grace when put upon a stage? I knew I hadn't been alone in holding a low opinion of O'Neill's work. Eric Bentley had, in *In Search of Theater,* written that though he had given O'Neill's plays every benefit of the doubt, he was forced to report that they were mostly sound and fury, crude mixtures of melodrama and intellectual chic. Mary McCarthy had seen O'Neill as a national calamity on the scale of Dreiser and had stated in her review of *The Iceman Cometh* that by his choice of the word "pipedream" for man's illusions, O'Neill had demonstrated exactly what was wrong with him as a writer. Though Bentley and McCarthy were the most unremitting in their criticism of O'Neill, they were certainly not alone. Indeed, the decade that followed O'Neill's death produced little but sour revaluations of his work, and his only champions at that time seemed to be aging, half-articulate members of the Broadway intelligentsia. All artists have their times of fashion, but in O'Neill's case there seemed to be some question as to his being an artist at all.

SLOWLY gathering together copies of his plays from Paris bookstores, a job not made easier by the reviews of *Long Day's Journey,* I began reading the entire O'Neill canon and when I finished I found something startling and cheering. O'Neill's early work had been everything I'd thought it to be, a fact that, to me, was not startling and certainly not cheering. Something more important, however, than confirmation of my judgment resulted from my spending nights wondering if there was any way *Dynamo* might be given a semblance of coherence in production or if *Desire under the Elms* could be admired by anyone except self-indulgent actors. It was the discovery that an artist can transform himself, that at any time in his life, no matter how unpromising the results of past efforts, he may discover the voice, the subject, and the tone that uniquely suit him, and fashion from them works of an order completely different from their predecessors.

I am not now speaking of anything like maturation, a process that implies at least a certain degree of continuity. What O'Neill presents us with in his last plays is the result of an almost complete rupture of his artistic manner; what has gone before in no way prepares one for what will follow. The only comparable literary transformation that I can think of in this century is that of Yeats, but his was not so complete as O'Neill's, nor so unexpected. When Yeats found his own world and the language to adorn and animate it, he went from being a minor to a major poet. When O'Neill found his world and his words, he had made no place for himself to come from; he was simply suddenly where he wanted to be, suddenly a master of his art.

WHAT took him so long, one wonders? And what finally caused the transformation to take place? Louis Sheaffer's two-volume biography, *O'Neill: Son and Playwright* and *O'Neill: Son and Artist,** provides no answer. First, because its author believes that O'Neill's genius was present in almost every play he wrote, an attitude he generally substantiates by quoting favorable reviews written at the times of the plays' debuts. Second, because O'Neill was not one to theorize about his work or to reflect on it with any sharp, critical objectivity. Therefore, though his biography abounds with details about production squabbles and family arguments, there is little in it that will help explain what took place in O'Neill's inner life while he was evolving into our first playwright.

Although no direct evidence is available, there is enough known about O'Neill's early artistic influence and beliefs to make it easy to speculate about what caused the strained manner of his early plays. One cause, I'm certain, is that O'Neill, like so many American writers of the period, suffered from the ugly-truth fixation, a peculiar form of literary reaction that sets in generally after a long period of stylized convention and artificial sentiment. When O'Neill came into the American theater, it had never known anything except such a period, and he therefore found it easy to gain attention from those who wanted to see our drama have something to do with life again. Unfortunately, what O'Neill considered life in those days had about as much reality to it as did the melodramas in which his actor-father, in a bitter quest for financial security, had toured the country. In all the rough, tormented examples of humanity he created in his early work, there shines the simplistic faith of the writer who created them, a faith that believes that a serious work of art perforce must thrust upon its public something that public would rather not know about or consider.

Such a faith, had it been unadorned, would possibly have made O'Neill no more dangerous than any other naive realist. However, O'Neill had other ambitions for his talent. He had, after all, wanted to be a poet and had gotten his notions of literary lowlife from Baudelaire, a poet who had had the good sense to realize that if one must write about whores, it is best to use them as symbols for reflection rather than object lessons about life. A dramatist cannot, of course, be reflective about his characters, at least so that it shows in the finished work. If he is to get poetry into them he must find dramatic forms that allow one to realize that an ugly truth has its rights also to verbal glory. Thus we have those strange dramatic limbos in which *The Hairy Ape, The Emperor Jones,* and *The Great God Brown* are played, twilight worlds that are every bit as artificial and "theatrical" as the melodrama O'Neill believed he was waging war upon. Again and

*The second volume has just been brought out by Little, Brown, 673 pp., $15.00.

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again in these plays, ugly truths are prodded into a wobbly transcendence of their humble origins, while human speech is tortured into something the playwright thinks is the proper manner of address in heroic surroundings.

Such a notion might produce, at best, a few odd moments of good verse if the playwright were truly a poet. O'Neill was not, and these attempts to get dramatic prose to do poetry's work almost ruined him as a dramatist as well.

ANOTHER affliction of O'Neill's was his obsession with the idea of restoring antique forms of tragedy for modern use. It follows that if an ugly truth is ready for the world as its stage and poetry as its language, it is ready also for the dignity of participation in a tragic myth. No matter if the myth can't be abstracted from the society that created it without losing much of its meaning and all of its terror. If one knows that the characters involved are meant to be the descendants of Electra, Agamemnon, Orestes, *et al.*, then, though their behavior appears peevishly lunatic in a modern world that has its own sense of tragic necessity, one will be forced to accept them as representative of the dark and consistent destiny of our species.

All this would be enough for hours of tedious drama. Yet O'Neill had still another weakness to overcome. He was from time to time addicted to the idea that he was meant to transmit to us the philosophic and scientific fashions of his time in a manner that would make them dramatically compelling. How he fared in this form of drama can be seen, if one has the curiosity necessary to endure its nine acts, in *Strange Interlude,* a mixture of Shavian morality, Freudian psychology, and novelistic technique that only a theatrical press agent would call Joycean. This is a play that even Mr. Sheaffer takes exception to—though at the end of the critique he does make the usual despite-these-many-flaws apology that invariably comes up when an O'Neill worshiper has dared an unflattering remark about the master's work—a play in which O'Neill, aiming for a drama of infinite size, achieved one of interminable length.

IT IS easy to explain his failure because anyone who has written for the theater, or has thought seriously about doing so, recognizes himself in many of O'Neill's failures. What young dramatist who will accomplish anything of importance doesn't want the power and range of Greek drama restored to the theater, or doesn't want dramatic language to be something more than the precisely imitated speech of the semi-articulate, or has no desire to test his imagination through experiments founded on principles other than those the commercial theater is comfortable with? Who, in short, at least when he is beginning, is not a romantic about his art, someone who will understand O'Neill's failures and love them a little even while arguing in full heat against their being taken for masterpieces? It is as though O'Neill demonstrated for all who followed him every pitfall a modern dramatist, especially an American, has in his path.

But how is one to understand the transformation? How is one to explain the simple force of *Long Day's Journey into Night* or *Moon for the Misbegotten,* or the culminative power of *The Iceman Cometh*—a play whose faults are truly easily forgotten and whose vision of failure in America is, Miss McCarthy, no pipe-dream?

I would only guess at the cause. Perhaps as he withdrew more and more from the social life of the theater he found less need to dazzle it with innovation. Perhaps he saw life more clearly as it receded from him. Perhaps the ghosts he called upon demanded that he take no liberties in perpetuating their memory. But it is no matter why O'Neill became the great dramatist he always wanted to be. That he did is a judgment as indisputable as any judgment about the nature of art can be. Reading his life, one discovers that he thought himself, in his romantic way, damned. One honors him because, returning his romanticism, one sees in him a rare symbol of redemption.

Movies

Season's End

William S. Pechter

AROUND September every year, I begin to recognize the symptoms. My palms sweat. I'm nervous, irritable. Above all, I'm filled with a powerful premonition that I'll soon be seeing more movies than I want to, and enjoying them less. Yes, it's festival time, but more than that, and as surely as Thanksgiving portends Christmas, it's end-of-year time, time for valedictions, for spotting trends and bestowing honors. And what if one not only has no candidate for honors, but hasn't even spotted a trend? Already, by autumn, the New York Film Festival and New York *Times* had fallen into line behind the proposition that this is the year of the young American director (a nice contrast, at least, to the proposition given some currency last year that, apart from *The Godfather*'s unassailable hegemony, 1972 was the year of the Old Master, or Aging Professional, a notion jerry-built by roping together the year's one great work, Buñuel's *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* with such misfortunes as Hitchcock's *Frenzy,* Huston's *Fat City,* Cukor's *Travels with My Aunt,* and, scraping bottom, Billy Wilder's *Avanti!*). Does one dare to risk being left behind?

End-of-year madness began early this year with the summertime announcement of "An American Movie by a New Director" via a series of full-page ads in the Sunday *Times* and elsewhere featuring photos of jodhpur-clad new director, James William Guercio, showing off his various new-director's gear, though one could search those ads in vain to discover even so much as the cast of *Electra Glide in Blue,* the film he had made. As it transpired, Guer-

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cio was a millionaire rock-record producer who, having bought himself a movie and a new career, was now doing his best to buy himself a reputation; but the attempt misfired, and his film, after attracting some favorable word-of-mouth at the Cannes festival, opened to an almost unanimous backlash of hostile reviews. In truth, the film is bad, with its usual new-director's propensity to crowd the action indoors (so that much of the time we hardly even know where we are), and open up the exteriors into travelogue vistas. The murder plot is bungled, and the big scenes (of a detective's breakdown, and a cop's confession to his buddy that he's gone crooked) are hysterically overwrought, while veteran character actor, Elisha Cook, Jr., has been seduced into giving what is probably the one performance in his career in which one can't take pleasure.

And yet *Electra Glide in Blue* isn't really that bad either, certainly not the run-of-the-mill motorcycle flick it's been dismissed as (though by the time it reached the West Coast it had been sufficiently battered by the critics to advertise itself as just another bike movie), with a fair number of nice descriptive details to set against its major dramatic failures. And quite apart from the question of what modest directorial talent it displays, its critical reception must have seemed to Guercio the rudest of ingratitude, given the film's calculated inclusion of something for everyone, from cop-hating hippies to law-and-order zealots. Somehow this one movie manages to encompass scenes depicting the policeman as scorned champion of America's basic values with others of "pigs" brutalizing long-hairs; an admiring portrait of a swaggering "Dirty-Harry"-style detective (given to monologues on the threats of "civilian brutality" aimed at "police genocide") giving way to his exposure as a deranged bully; and a scene of a long-haired kid apparently being framed by a cop in a dope bust mirrored by one of the same kid, now apparently an actual dealer, shooting down in cold blood a cop only trying to help him (in an act almost exactly reversing the climactic murder in *Easy Rider*). This inflammatory mélange then closes with a long photographic flourish set to rock music, which Guercio has described as his hymn to the hope of a better America: having produced himself a movie, rock-record producer decides to cover all bets and produce another record. Yet, warts and all, there are ways in which *Electra Glide in Blue* might be considered the real picture of the year: with its careful attempt to touch all bases in appealing to the prejudices of, and the worst in, practically everybody, probably as good a movie as any to serve as a record for posterity of the spectrum of bad feeling which characterized this fifth year of the Nixon Era.

OF COURSE, the New York *Times* (though not the New York Film Festival) pointedly excluded *Electra Glide in Blue* from its honors to films by new American directors, yet surely the case for such a trend can't seriously be argued from such a square little nothing as *Bang the Drum Slowly,* or George Lucas's featherweight *American Graffiti,* or John Milius's derivative *Dillinger,* or Ralph Bakshi's exercise in ashcan Disney in *Heavy Traffic,* or Brian De Palma's rummaging around in Hitchcock's trash pile in *Sisters.* Indeed, excepting only James Frawley's *Kid Blue* and Terence Malick's *Badlands,* one of the big flops and few hits of the New York festival, respectively (and both of which I haven't seen), it becomes clear that the case rests almost entirely on Martin Scorsese's *Mean Streets,* and, for a while, the film, a kind of cross between *The Godfather* and *I Vitelloni* set among the petty Mafiosi of New York's Little Italy, looks as if it might even be able to shoulder such a weight. Yet in a way the movie begins so beautifully and with such confident control (via a series of vignettes introducing the principal characters) that it establishes a level it cannot itself live up to, and barely ten minutes after it has begun one is aware (during a protracted and at least partly improvised dialogue about some borrowed money which takes place between two of the characters in the back room of a bar) of a frittering away of some of its power. And lively and vital as the film continues to be thereafter, one remains from then on aware of the slow but steady leakage of its power, even, one might say, the ceding of its power by the director, in the name of a quest for that air of spontaneity which the film achieves in abundance, but only at a cost.

Basically, the approaches to improvisation in films have been drawn between those of early Godard, giving his actors their lines but only at the last minute to prevent them sounding worked over, and John Cassavetes (taken up by Mailer), allowing the actors to invent their lines guided by their psychological interpretation of the character, in hopes that some higher truth will emerge from the unpredictable chemistry of the actor-characters' interaction; the differences are essentially those between a director's cinema, using the actor's unpreparedness as one more tool in the director's creative control, and a cinema in which the actors hold an equal partnership in the work's creation. When the latter method works, miracles can happen, but rarely, unless the director's partner is an improvising actor with the genius of a Brando, can such miracles be sustained for the duration of the picture. *Mean Streets* has some moments touched by this miraculous excitement, and others that simply grind to a halt with that slightly dead, faintly embarrassed sense which always seems to attend actors improvising beyond the limits of their artistic capabilities, and waiting for something to happen. (The hallmark of such scenes is protraction and repetition—"What d'ya mean [the last line then repeated]?"—as the actors pass the buck and stall for time, and the characteristic admission of failure comes with the actors going for laughs as the most familiar and trusted escape from their discomfort.) The actors in *Mean Streets* are all good, but none of them, including Robert De Niro (who is to take over the Brando role in Coppola's sequel to *The Godfather),* seems up to the creative responsibility he's asked to shoulder; though De Niro comes across

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here as a far more intelligent actor than one might have expected from his work in *Bang the Drum Slowly,* even he falls back more often than he should on such effectively ingratiating things as his crazy grin, and the "hey-goombah" bits of stage-Italian business.

So finally, for all its sharp intelligence in both acting and direction, *Mean Streets* amounts to less than it should. Scorsese has a subject (the conflicting claims of church and street on the soul of his protagonist),* and a main character (who previously appeared in his first feature film, *Who's That Knocking on My Door?,* which I haven't seen), and an ethnic milieu which he clearly knows fully and intimately; and he has (as Cassavetes and Mailer basically have not) a director's grasp of the means of his medium. What *Mean Streets* lacks, whether owing to Scorsese's limitations or to the priority he gives to improvisation, is a formal structure, an organizing action; without it, all the film's life seems to seep to its margins, to lie in its incidentals and details. The film is right on target, but goes nowhere, and by the movie's end its spontaneity, which, compared with the operatic heaviness of *The Godfather,* seemed at first the byproduct of Scorsese's greater intimacy with his subject matter, seems less telling than *The Godfather*'s measured effects; indeed, apart from its opening, probably the most wholly successful scenes in the Scorsese film are the most conventionally realized ones with Cesare Danova playing a Mafia don. (Perhaps it owes something also to the Scorsese film's reliance on improvisation that such apparent inconsistencies as its religious-guilt-wracked protagonist's blaspheming at a bar have been allowed to stand, and that the impression it conveys of the passage of time is so blurred that one year's St. Anthony's Festival seems to follow on the heels of another.) Given how little sense *Mean Streets* generates of knowing where it's going, it's hardly surprising that the film doesn't so much conclude as simply stop—with a meaningless burst of violence (violence being for a director what laughs are for an actor: an easy way out; and this director seems already to know a little too well how to whip things up with effective applications of violent action).

All of which may seem unduly harsh on a work as promising as *Mean Streets,* though my view of Scorsese has been somewhat jaundiced by my having seen his previous film, *Boxcar Bertha,* and knowing just how panderingly he can lay on the violence when the exigencies of turning a buck demand it. But in part harshness seems called for just because *Mean Streets* is a work of real promise, with much that is vivid and brilliant in it which the film as a whole fails to live up to. It's just because, at its best, the stakes involved seem so high, that I resent the way *Mean Streets* finally leaves one with such small change.

ANY contention that 1973 might again be the year of the Old Master (albeit junior division) gets a setback from the disappointment of *The New Land,* Jan Troell's sequel to *The Emigrants,* though whether the film's failure to be as compelling as its predecessor owes more to its lack of as powerful an informing idea or simply to producer's cuts (which the earlier film also suffered) is difficult to know. It gets set back even further by *Day for Night,* Truffaut's latest bit of costume jewelry, all of whose polish can't disguise its essential worthlessness. This is a movie about moviemaking whose infatuation with moviemaking is all in its sleight of hand, its "magic"—in its special effects, artificial snow, stunt driving, deceptive sets and filters—and all of which seems finally just to add up to another paean to the sentiment that the show must go on. When the show is *Meet Pamela,* the utterly banal movie being made within the movie, one might reasonably wonder why; and when the film's leading man dies, and Truffaut (playing *Meet Pamela*'s director) elegiacally comments, "There will be no more movies like *Meet Pamela,*" one's inclination is to reply, "And about time!" The whole thing is, needless to say, graceful and charming in Truffaut's most accomplished graceful-and-charming style; as late Truffaut goes, I still value more highly even the rather awkwardly managed seriousness of *Two English Girls.* The closing helicopter shot seems an almost too apt analogy to the film as a whole, a work so weightless that it takes every ounce of talent it can get from everyone concerned (and it gets plenty from Valentina Cortese) merely to keep it from levitating balloonlike from the screen and off into the stratosphere.

IS IT possible then (my pulse races chauvinistically) that 1973 might be the year of the middle-aged? Much as I'd like to believe this, I can't quite blot out the memory of Peckinpah's *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid,* nor refashion it in my mind, from what remains in its producer-mutilated version, into anything other than a rash adventure in inadvertent self-parody. Nor can I bring myself to join in that happy consensus of those now resurrecting Robert Altman's film of Raymond Chandler's *The Long Goodbye* so as to outfit it according to the latest in New York fashions. A stiff is a stiff, even when propped up by Pauline Kael.

As it happens, I was one of those who first saw *The Long Goodbye* some eight months before its New York opening, during its disastrous run in the provinces when, contrary to legend, it was decently supported by an ad campaign far more in keeping with what is genuinely likable about the film than is the campy-spoofy comic strip (personally selected by Altman) which is seeing it through its second life. Mythology now has it that the film at first flopped because sentimental Chandler devotees found its irreverent treatment of their cherished memories too hard a pill to swallow, a line Altman himself has taken one twist further by declaring, "Audiences are disturbed because it raises questions about their own moral hypocrisy." (Peckinpah, at least, has never gone in for Altman's conde-

* Though he has perhaps an even richer if less articulated one in the way the protagonist is caught up in acting out, with two "mental defectives" under his protection, the fantasy of his being a Mafia godfather.

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scending abuse of his audience to explain away his failures.) But in fact, outside of Chandler himself and a few mystery addicts and film buffs, who exactly does regard with solemn reverence the generic conventions that Altman, with so smug and self-congratulatory a display of boldly slaying dragons, purports to mock? The important difference between Elliott Gould smirking his way through a Jolson impression in *The Long Goodbye* and Bogart turning up his hat brim and affecting glasses and a lisp to inquire after a second edition of *Ben Hur* at a shady bookshop in *The Big Sleep* is that the latter was funny and had comic style and the former isn't and does not. Right or wrong, the out-of-town audiences for *The Long Goodbye* stayed away, but their staying away had as little to do with an attachment to Chandler (not to say, moral hypocrisy) as does the fact that the film is packing in the world's most easily intimidated audiences in New York. (In fairness to those audiences, it must be said that even almost all the critics in concert were unable to browbeat them into going to see *The Last American Hero* when there were no hints of campy-spoofy novelty with which to entice them, but only a good movie.)

Is Altman really unaware that much of *The Big Sleep,* and at least parts of several of the other Chandler-Marlowe films, were played intentionally for comedy? (Very possibly he is, given his ability to speak of the novel from which he's adapted his subsequent, as yet unreleased, film as an unknown work, despite the fact it's already served as the basis for a much-admired film by another director.*) As an exercise in flogging dead horses, Altman slamming the menace to our moral awareness posed by private-eye films is like nothing so much as Ken Russell going full steam after the pernicious lies of musicals in *The Boy Friend.* Perhaps Altman is unaware also that the book of *The Long Goodbye* isn't even typical Chandler, but his attempt (rather like Hammett's in *The Glass Key)* to break out of the generic mold (in the book, Marlowe contemplate s marriage) and write a "real" novel, and, perhaps owing to this, his least good book. (Not surprisingly, when private-eye films started to be made again in the 60's, it wasn't *The Long Goodbye* among Chandler's unfilmed novels that was turned to first, but his amusing and unpretentious *The Little Sister,* made into the mediocre *Marlowe.*) More importantly, is Altman unaware that the dumb and seedy private eye, the private eye as anachronistic loser, is already (via such little-known but portentous films as *Hickey & Boggs* and the significantly named *Chandler)* as much a new cliché in our movies as The Last Cowboy? (At least the clichés that *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid* runs into the ground are largely of its director's own coinage.) When Gould's Marlowe wakes up in the middle of the night and goes through his garbage to find something to feed his cat at the beginning of *The Long Goodbye,* one's thoughts turn not to the audacious changes wrought by the film on the image of the private eye, but rather to recollections of Paul Newman scooping yesterday's used coffee grounds out of the garbage at the beginning of *Harper.* And when you sound echoes of *Harper,* you'd better believe your aim is low. A filmmaker would practically have to be an amnesiac to believe he was breaking ground with this latest Marlowe movie.

In fact, *The Long Goodbye,* with its concentration on issues so peripheral to the private-eye genre as loyalty, cannot, any more than *Hickey & Boggs* or *Chandler,* compare with Robert Aldrich's *Kiss Me Deadly* of some eighteen years ago, which took the genre apart with a sustained savagery on just those live issues where it was really vulnerable: snooping and acquisitiveness. Indeed, were one to attempt to make a case for *The Long Goodbye,* I think it might be better done without regard to Chandler at all, less as a cutting criticism of the private-eye genre than as a shaggy-dog story using the private-eye genre as its jumping-off point. I'm not sure I like this *The Long Goodbye* very much better, but at least it accounts for the fact that, though Altman insists on speaking disdainfully of his Philip Marlowe as a fool and a "goat," the actual sense of Gould's shambles of a private detective that one gets from the film is of a character seen quite affectionately, and of the film itself as a rather gentle farewell to a celebrated detective not so very different in feeling from that of Billy Wilder's *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes.*

Seen this way, the real issue becomes not how trenchant *The Long Goodbye* is (since it isn't trenchant at all), but how funny. How funny is it? As funny as Elliott Gould wisecracking in blackface, or some buffoonish hoodlums undressing to show they're not hiding anything, or a shot of some dogs fornicating; in humor, as in perhaps nothing else but sexual predilections, there's no accounting for tastes. (To my taste, the funniest moment in the movie is one almost thrown away when Marlowe returns at night to a mental hospital virtually all of whose inmates seem to be scurrying about the grounds with their keepers in pursuit.) Like *Mean Streets,* much of *The Long Goodbye* appears to be improvised, though, since here getting laughs is the object, the film often suggests the desperately facetious antics of someone putting a lampshade on his head to try to liven up some sagging party. (The most obviously improvised scene, of Marlowe shouting angrily at some cops on a beach at night, is meant to be taken seriously, and, for all its straining to heat up the emotional temperature, the deadest thing in the movie.)

To be sure, there are some beautiful things in *The Long Goodbye,* as in almost any Altman movie: the wash of diaphanous images (photographed as usual by Vilmos Zsigmond) that are almost an Altman trademark, one stunning scene of violence, and, despite the knee-jerk anti-Los Angeles potshots, an almost palpable evocation of the atmosphere of balmy Los Angeles nights. But these are things, at this stage of Altman's career, that one wants to begin with, even to take for granted. What bothers me most

* The novel is *Thieves Like Us* by Edward Anderson; the film was Nicholas Ray's first, *They Live By Night.*

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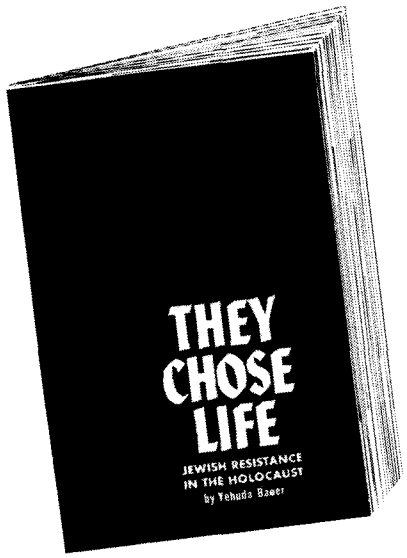

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about *The Long Goodbye* is not that as spoof or satire it's so much less sharp than *Beat the Devil,* or even *Pulp* or *Gumshoe,* since I think it's not as spoof or satire that it's best taken. What bothers me most is that it's so much less good than *McCabe & Mrs. Miller,* and so backward a step in the career of a director who shows increasing signs of having lost his footing.

WHICH leaves one at the end of the year bestowing honors on—what? On *The Devil in Miss Jones* for its dragging of the porno film into its decadence via audience-punishing moralizing? Or on a throwback to a 40's weepie, what used to be called a "woman's picture," in *The Way We Were*? The male lead in *The Way We Were,* a politically uncommitted screenwriter seen living through the period of the blacklist, at one point comments cynically that in five years the blacklisting will all have blown over with some director's discovery that he needs one of the blacklistees to help him on a picture. In reality, the five-year estimate proved somewhat overoptimistic, but who would have guessed that the picture they'd end up making might be a 40's weepie about the blacklisting?

Or that it might be a film (written by ex-blacklistee, Dalton Trumbo, and starring ex-blacklistee, Will Geer) naming names in challenging a government commission's report on a President's assassination? In fact, I'd be all for a film forcefully taking issue with the Warren Commission's findings if it existed, but *Executive Action* comes so close to nonexistence on the screen (and is so starved for visual interest) that at one point we watch an assemblage of what are depicted as the most powerfully placed right-wing individuals in the country as they review an informational presentation about Oswald in which a narration to the effect that on such a date Oswald visited Russia and the U.S. Embassy is accompanied by stock pictures of Russia and the U.S. Embassy on some slides, as though the viewers might be at a loss to follow without them. In fact, the whole film is fundamentally a slide presentation illustrating the thesis that our fates are secretly decided by a conspiracy of emotionless men, twisting dials and pushing buttons ("Did such a conspiracy exist?" the film asks. "We merely suggest that it could have existed."), and, whether one finds this plausible or not, on one key point, the film, and the New York *Times*'s praise of it, seem to me exactly wrong. It is precisely in a conspiracy that we want to believe, since, frightening as it may be, it at least allows that our lives are being shaped by a series of rational decisions, however unknowable to and unaffected by us. It's the idea that one crazed loner with a gun might truly be able to alter the course of world events that brings one staring terrifiedly into the abyss.

And so one waits as 1973 closes, laurels in hand, like a jilted bridegroom. Maybe there's been a duller year for movies, and I just don't remember it; in any case, even in that dullness I'm unable to spot a trend, since I know it would take only one work on the order of last year's *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* to alter my perception of the period drastically. Yet having got this far into the year (I write in late November) without such a work, I find myself almost perversely hoping that it doesn't come, so I can cast my vote, only half in protest, in the balloting for best actors by the critics' circle of which I'm a member, for Vincent Price, in the inconsistently inventive but unflaggingly good-humored horror film, *Theatre of Blood,* which may not be much, but is nevertheless about as enjoyable a movie as any I've seen this year. In the film, Price exuberantly plays a ham Shakespearean actor who, rejected for annual best-acting honors by a uniformly nasty critics' circle, proceeds elaborately to murder the members of the circle one by one. Yes, a good idea! Though, at the end of a year like this one, a plot about a nasty critic who sets about disposing of an assortment of overpraised and underdeveloped filmmakers doesn't seem like such a bad idea either.

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Books in Review

Orthodox Unconventionality

ECONOMICS AND THE PUBLIC PURPOSE. By JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH. *Houghton Mifflin. 334 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by RUDOLF KLEIN

SUCCESS must be very frustrating for Professor Galbraith. He has now spent a lifetime attacking the "conventional wisdom" of society, criticizing his fellow economists for clinging to outmoded ideas, and advocating a variety of heterodox policies. He has done so with wit, elegance, and passion. But what happens? He ends up not as a prophet in the wilderness but as the pet intellectual of the mass media. His fellow citizens send him abroad to represent their country. His fellow economists elect him as the president of their association. His ideas about changing the balance between private consumption and public investment have become everyday slogans of political discourse.

For someone who appears to pride himself on being unorthodox, who takes so much pleasure in trying to shock his audience, this must be a disconcerting experience. And much of the interest of Galbraith's latest book lies in the stratagems he adopts to meet the challenge of success and acceptance.

The starting point of Galbraith's argument, following on *The Affluent Society* and *The New Industrial State*, is that any resemblance between the traditional market model of the economy and reality is coincidental. Far from the consumer calling the tune, decisions are made by the "technostructure" of managers, technocrats, and bureaucrats straddling the worlds of the big corporations and government. This technostructure is primarily interested not in maximizing profits but in maximizing its own security and growth. To this end, it plans its own progress by limiting competition, by manipulating the consumer through advertising, and by harnessing the expenditures and policies of government to its own ends.

Much of this is familiar, if only because it repeats what Galbraith has been writing over the years. How, then, can it be given a gloss of unorthodoxy? The answer is by presenting Galbraith's fellow economists as a band of fuddy-duddies—subscribing to the "neoclassical model" of the economy, worshipers at the shrine of Adam Smith and other false prophets, so deluded by their theories that they cannot see what goes on in the world around them, and consequently indoctrinating their students with at best irrelevant, at worst damaging, notions.

Galbraith's fellow economists can, no doubt, take care of themselves. If his picture of them is a caricature, they are capable of saying so. More serious is the price Galbraith pays for his insistence on distinguishing his own views from the professional consensus (although he does admit that a few converts have gathered around him). This leads him to adopt an inflationary verbal rhetoric of exaggeration: just as in Gresham's law bad money drives out the good, so in Galbraith's case the exaggerated arguments drive out the good ones.

Take, for example, his central argument that in the planning system the power of the producer has replaced the power of the consumer. In a weak form, this argument would command widespread agreement: Galbraith's point that employers and trade unions share a common interest in raising wages and prices, rather than adjusting both to consumer demand as the classic model demands, has been given added point by the inflation of the past year. But he is not satisfied to argue, with the majority of economists, that the traditional model is imperfect. He wants to demonstrate that it is irrelevant. And that involves him in some curious verbal slitherings.

Galbraith's argument demands that the consumer be presented as the passive victim of the planning system. At one point we read that the "admirable vision of the ultimate power of the user cannot be sustained, however, if his tastes and needs fall under the authority of the producer." But a few lines later this thundering phrase appears in a minor key, and becomes "a measure of authority." Subsequently, there are further variations still, with producers having "effective power over the users," "the power to influence the individual consumer," "the power to manage the individual consumer," and so on. Later Galbraith concedes that the process of consumer management by producers is imperfect and incomplete. But if it is, and if for "authority" and "power" it is better to read influence and persuasion, what is left of Galbraith's model? Classic economic theory is held up to ridicule by him for holding that the consumer is sovereign. But why, then, should we accept Galbraith's anti-model of producer sovereignty? Why substitute one inadequate model for another?

IN any case, Galbraith himself now clearly realizes that this is an incomplete picture. So in this book he introduces and develops a further idea: that alongside the planned system of the technostructure, there exists also a market economy—"the world of the farmer, repairman, retailer, small manufacturer, plumber, television repairman, service-station operator, medical practitioner, artist,

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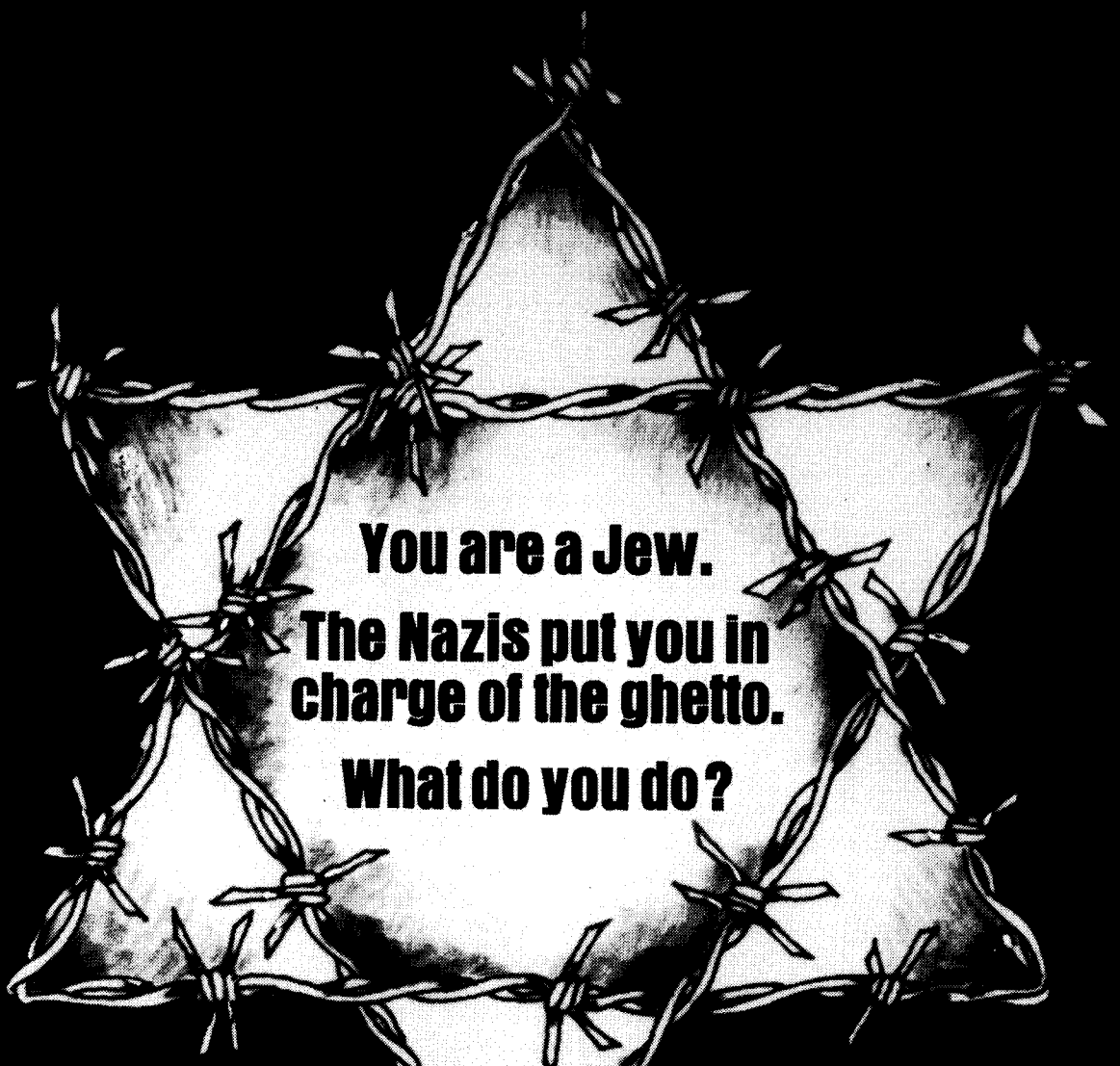

The question was not a hypothetical one for Chaim Rumkowski in Lodz, Adam Czerniakow in Warsaw, and Jacob Gens in Vilna. All three made the desperate error of accepting the job. All three became accomplices in unspeakable crimes. And all three died believing they had done the right thing.

Leonard Tushnet's book, THE PAVEMENT OF HELL, explores the fatal moral choices that made their names a "curse and a byword in the history of the Holocaust." It reveals the vanity that made them willing tools, the ignorance that led them to underestimate the bestiality of the Nazis, the arrogance that allowed them to commit murder in order to "save lives." But, most shocking of all, the book leaves us with the haunting fear that in their place we might have done the same thing.

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actress, photographer, and pornographer." This fragmented market economy is, in Galbraith's view, where the traditional model of cutthroat competition still applies, with the consumer dictating to the producer. As a result, he argues, the market economy is exploited by the planning system. This exploitation is all the worse for often being self-induced: the farmer and his family, and the others, are so deluded by the work ethic—such slaves to the conventional wisdom of society—that they voluntarily work longer hours for smaller rewards than do those employed in the planning system.

Obviously, there is an implicit contradiction between this theme and Galbraith's insistence, when discussing the planning system, that the consumer is a sort of idiot child. If the consumer is so manipulable by the technostructure, why does he become the conventional figure of the economic textbooks in pursuit of his own self-interest when he deals with a repairman or shopkeeper? Galbraith's answer would seem to be that the big corporations can spend millions brainwashing the public while small firms cannot. To this, though, there is a very simple reply, if one adopts one of Galbraith's own strategies for dealing with inconvenient criticisms and for giving an appearance of bold unorthodoxy: this is that Galbraith himself has been brainwashed by Madison Avenue's claims for its own products—advertising. For one of his most irritating habits is to present himself as the one man who sees the truth behind appearances—who can distinguish (like the Marxists) between false and real consciousness or (like the Freudians) between rationalizations and real motives. If one disagrees with him, one therefore stigmatizes oneself as conventional in thought and conformist in one's views; if one agrees with him, one becomes part of the select band of those who are not deceived by the "socially convenient virtues" and who sees them for what they are—the values propagated by the planning system in order to further its own purposes.

Irritation is compounded by the fact that Galbraith is right to question conventional wisdom, then spoils a good case by his intellectually arrogant assumptions about the motives of other people. Underlying much of his thesis is the belief that most people simply do not know what is good for them, but that Professor Galbraith does. It is just conceivable, after all, that the real power of the technostructure rests not on its ability to control the consumer but on its readiness to adjust its activities to the self-interest of the majority of the public. This does not necessarily make those activities any more admirable: it is still possible to argue, with Galbraith, that too little emphasis is placed on social activities like the arts. But it does make them comprehensible in a way Galbraith's assumptions do not. As he correctly points out, the common interests of managements and unions frequently outweigh their differences; however, he fails to draw from this the appropriate conclusion—that the technostructure now has a constituency measured in millions, and that its power rests on the concordance of its self-interest with that of a very large section of the population. The values of that population may not be Professor Galbraith's (or mine, for that matter); that does not mean that they can be dismissed as artificial or corrupted by advertising.

ALTOGETHER there are a number of odd features about Galbraith's line of reasoning. Implicit in his whole argument is the idea that there is some sort of "right" or "appropriate" standard of living—rather like the medieval just wage—beyond which consumers can only be induced to go by persuasion and manipulation. But this is too crucial a point, surely, to be left implicit and unargued. If this is indeed Galbraith's view (and it is difficult to see how it cannot be), then the onus is on him to specify what the right standard of living is. It is clear that he thinks too much is spent on cars and too little on mass transit; but what, in this context, is too much? Again, in referring to innovations which are produced to satisfy the desire of the technostructure to expand rather than real needs, he can do no better than cite plastic grass and genital deodorants—which hardly make a significant dent in the GNP, I should imagine.

More fundamentally still, there is a contradiction at the root of Galbraith's argument. The technostructure, he rightly points out, is concerned to maximize its own satisfactions, not profits. Its members want security for themselves, opportunities to exercise their own expertise, and chances of promotion. Hence, he concludes, the emphasis on economic growth, irrespective of social considerations about pollution and so on. But he fails to notice, oddly enough, that the values he imputes to the technostructure may have a wider appeal. After all, it doesn't need an advertising campaign or any great effort of persuasion to make people value security, opportunities, and promotion prospects. In short, the technostructure may well be delivering the goods—in a general, not specific, way—that most people want.

There remains Galbraith's other indictment of the planning system: that it involves the exploitation of the market economy. Here there is a very real problem in following his argument: its imprecision is such as to make it difficult to discuss in detail. (At one point Galbraith says: "In assessing the public influence of the planning system, there is danger in being too specific. Its greatest source of such power is subjective." This sort of assertion seems to put Galbraith's thesis beyond rational proof or disproof.) About the only evidence cited by him is that in 1971 average hourly wages in durable-goods manufacture were $3.80, while in services, retail trade, and agriculture the equivalent figures were respectively $2.99, $2.57, and $1.48. All this suggests to me that the workers in these industries were underpaid, perhaps because the unions are weak in these sectors; it does not tell me anything about the income of the owners of small businesses, farms, and so on—or, perhaps more important, about the range of income distribution as among different sectors and different parts

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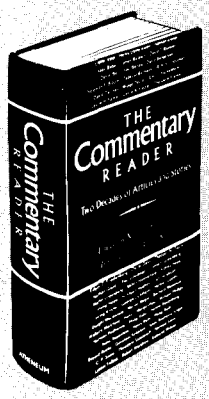

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of the United States. In any case, since Galbraith includes medical practitioners and pornographers in this category—not conspicuously exploited occupations—it is impossible to know just how wide an application his generalization has.

But, then, Galbraith tends to be contemptuous of those who dare to ask for such precision. In doing so, I am again in danger of stigmatizing myself. For as a footnote points out, "the standard (and highly effective) weapon of the defenders of established belief is to argue that any challenge is deficient in scholarship and therefore intellectually disreputable. . . . Scholars of the most mediocre mind are often the most vehement." To argue with Galbraith over facts is therefore to label oneself as both conventional and mediocre, and what could be more terrible than that? Still, accepting the risk, I think it worth citing one example of Galbraith's belief that the reiteration of assertions is an adequate substitute for reasoned arguments.

This comes out most clearly in his discussion of the position of women (a new departure for Galbraith: women do not feature in the indices of his two previous books and for once he seems to be following rather than setting fashions). Women, he writes, have become a crypto-servant class: sacrificing their careers on the altar of economic growth. "In few other matters has the economic system been so successful in establishing values and molding resulting behavior," he concludes. So one would naturally expect that as the planning system has developed, the number of women imprisoned in their own households and occupied in promoting consumption will have increased. In fact, as Galbraith could have discovered by consulting the Brookings Institution's *Setting National Priorities: The 1973 Budget*—a not altogether inaccessible or obscure publication—precisely the reverse has happened. In 1940 less than 10 per cent of all mothers with children went out to work. In subsequent decades the figure rose steadily, and by 1970 it was above 40 per cent. Yet oddly enough, consumption rose steadily over these decades. Using Galbraith's methods, one is almost tempted to diagnose an inverse relationship between economic growth and the role of women: growth increases as women emancipate themselves from their crypto-servant role.

The same sort of disdain for facts is evident elsewhere in the book. The interests of the technostructure, Galbraith argues, tend to promote expenditure on defense rather than on social purposes. Again, this is less than self-evident. Expenditure on defense fell from 41.8 per cent of the federal budget in 1950 to 33.0 per cent in 1974 (*Setting National Priorities: The 1974 Budget*), while expenditure on cash income maintenance rose from 15.2 per cent to 30.3 per cent. These figures are far from conclusive, even though they seem to point in the opposite direction from that assumed by Galbraith's argument. Still, at the very least, they need discussion.

GIVEN the flimsy foundations, it is not surprising that Galbraith's superstructure of proposals for reform is ramshackle. These fall into two categories. First, he proposes more public ownership—both in the planned system of the big corporations (where control has long since passed from the nominal owners of the capital in most cases) and in the market sector (where some form of public monopoly, as in medical care, may be preferable to the chaos of the market). Second, though, he concedes that transferring control from corporation managers to government bureaucracies leaves the technostructure untouched—and, if anything, reinforces its grip on power. So there follow a number of political proposals. Congressmen, for example, should not serve for more than one term, since otherwise they themselves become sucked into the technostructure. Above all, "the all-important question in choosing a President must henceforth be whether the candidate distinguishes the planning from the public interest and is committed to the latter."

Writing this review from Britain, I find it possible to take a fairly detached view of the proposals for greater state ownership

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and control. Once, this might have been denounced as socialism; now it is practiced even by conservative governments. While the U.S. government underwrote the Lockheed company, the Tory government in Britain actually took Rolls-Royce into public ownership. But the British experience has not only shown prophecies of catastrophe to be wildly wrong; it has also shown unexpected difficulties. Most people would probably agree that the British National Health Service is vastly preferable to anything found in the United States. But one of the hallmarks of its success has been its ability to provide a reasonable service, while keeping costs down: it absorbs a much smaller proportion of the national income than medical care in the U.S. This suggests a very different conclusion from that drawn by Galbraith, who always quotes medical care as one of his examples of under-spending on social services in the United States. It is not so much the level of spending which—above a certain minimum—determines the quality of the service provided, as the way in which the resources are distributed geographically and used by the professional running it. Even in the British NHS, the medical technostructure plays a large—and distorting—role in determining the distribution and use of resources: so far, at any rate, doctors have managed to prevent anything like political control over the policies of the NHS, though the battle is still being fought.

HERE we come to the central weakness of Galbraith's whole thesis: the absence of politics. It is central because it stems directly from his analysis of the problem. If one assumes, as he does, that there is such a thing as *the* public interest—as distinct from shifting coalitions of self-interest—and that this has been corrupted by the planning system, then Galbraith's search for a philosopher-king-president makes some sort of sense. But if one assumes that the public interest is constantly being redefined in the light of changing ideas (including those of Galbraith) and changing self-interests, then this St. George slaying the

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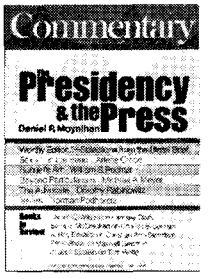

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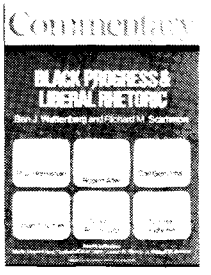

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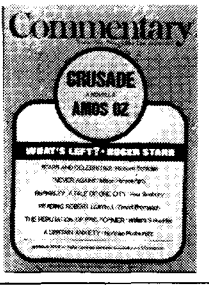

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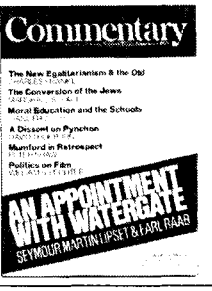

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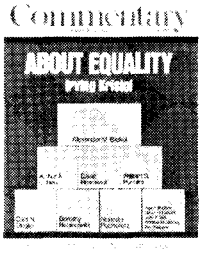

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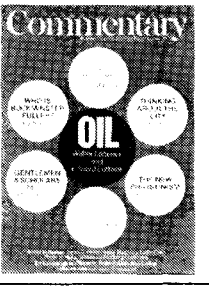

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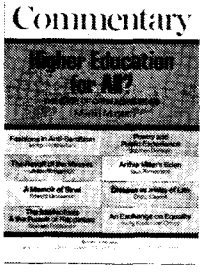

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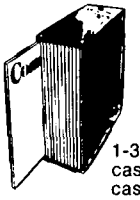

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dragon of the technostructure looks remarkably like Don Quixote. Who, after all, would be the constituency and supporters of Galbraith's ideal President—if not those poor, deluded consumers? What is the alternative power base—if not the technostructure and its allies, the unions?

Galbraith's ideas are too influential to be treated as nothing more than entertainment. It would be a pity if he continued to take the view that oversimplification is the soul of wit, and that neat generalizations are an adequate substitute for sustained, rigorous argument.

History as Myth

THE OATH. By ELIE WIESEL. *Random House. 283 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by LEON WIESELTIER

ELIE WIESEL has been working at his fiction of suffering for a quarter of a century. His personal project has been to keep the wounds of Auschwitz open by repeatedly pouring the salt of new literary reconstructions upon them, and thus to prevent the collective Jewish memory—and his own—from quietly letting the wounds heal. His latest novel, *The Oath,* is significant not for its originality or power—twenty-five years is a long time, and Wiesel is now repeating his own clichés—but rather because it is an attempt to bring his project to self-consciousness. Though it includes an episodic recounting of persecution and pogrom, *The Oath* is actually about the telling of the story itself.

Azriel, an old and very mysterious survivor of the destruction of the village of Kolvillag, is confronted by a young man, unnamed, who cannot come to grips with the Holocaust and therefore wishes to die. Azriel understands the young man's despair, but cannot help him. Only the telling of the story of Kolvillag will redeem his pain, but Azriel has taken an oath never to tell what he has seen. Were he to speak out, the murdered of Kolvillag would hold him responsible. This was Moshe the madman's idea, on the eve of the pogrom: the endless cycle of Jewish suffering and Jewish recollection, he had said, must be stopped. But if the suffering will continue, at least the recollection can end. And so an oath of silence was imposed upon the entire community of Kolvillag—only silence, said Moshe, could finally break the pattern of Jewish history. The murderers came to Kolvillag, and Azriel alone, bound to silence, survived. And now, a new generation demands to understand, and asks difficult and inevitable questions. Azriel looks painfully at the young man, and realizes that his story is his life and that this questioning young man keeps him alive. He decides to break his vow and tells the story. The pain of those who must see and understand what he has seen and understood forces him to rescue Kolvillag from oblivion.

This is a book, then, about the predicament of its author. Azriel is Wiesel, who feels responsible for the perpetuation of the memory of the Holocaust, for whom that memory has become coterminous with existence itself. His story, he believes, can somehow reach the sources of other people's pain—beyond the cathartic, the telling of the story has an almost redemptive power. He writes out of an allegiance to both the dead and the living. The author is very ambitious: he casts himself in a dramatic role which is for him of great significance and force. But it is a role which he cannot convincingly fill, which, sadly, very quickly becomes no more than a posture.

The Oath is not a very good novel. Though the account of Kolvillag is at places absorbing, it is generally trite. The prose is pedestrian, punctuated in times of stress by purple flourishes of mystical jargon. The book abounds in oracular pronouncements about life which rank with the most indulgent excesses of existentialism. Azriel is supposed to have a secret, an intuition which goes to the heart of all our pain, a hard-won wisdom which he must break his oath to reveal. But once he has done so, the wisdom is nowhere

LEON WIESELTIER, *a senior at Columbia College, has been awarded a Kellett Fellowship for 1974-76.*

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to be found. Beyond the sheer emotional shock at having been brought so close to the destruction, we cannot at all understand what it was that the young man found in Azriel's tale to transform his pain.

Wiesel's major literary technique is mood, the setting of an atmosphere of mystery, of pain, of spiritual and emotional extremes. But the setting then becomes the substance, and we are offered really nothing more than the lingering mood. Wiesel confuses style with substance, mistaking dizziness for heights, and obscurity for depths. He is so fascinated by mystery that it has itself become evidence of truth. And so he never tires of telling us about this kabbalist or that *rebbe,* this wise madman or that hunchbacked seer. For all his recollecting, there is little trace in Wiesel's work of life as we live it.

All this happens because Wiesel insists, in *The Oath* as well as in his other works, upon turning history into legend. The searing facts of the Holocaust, facts which no fiction will ever render more harrowing, become myths of the combat of good and evil, destiny and human will, man and God. Wiesel's characters are not people captured convincingly in the particularity of their precarious existences; they are rather archetypes of the varieties of Jewish pain, nominal props for a spectrum of spiritual states. But, as Lionel Trilling has observed, it is precisely in the particularity of our commitments that we suffer. The large and small tragedies of the Holocaust are subordinated by Wiesel to an aesthetics of mystification which may perhaps make them palatable for him but nonetheless robs them of their force. What remains is a spirituality become stylized, a suffering become rhetorical, and a kind of elaborate superficiality which does justice neither to the author's intentions nor to his terrible subject matter.

Wiesel is certainly right in claiming the ineffability of the experience he is trying to describe. Perhaps, finally, that is the whole point. Yet he himself continues to weave his own mythologies into his tales, while the facts—truths which thwart not only the mind but the imagination as well—explode all such pretensions, including his own. *Night,* Wiesel's first work, was a powerful book precisely because his memory itself was fresh, unencumbered by mythology. But mythology is rife in *The Oath*; it is, in fact, its very content, whereas memory is frightfully dim. At this point Wiesel's art is no match for the truth, and it may be time for him to reconsider Moshe the madman's oath. Perhaps silence is after all the most eloquent witness to all that death.

Listening to Music

RESPONSES. By DAVID CAIRNS. *Knopf. 288 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by B. H. HAGGIN

THE music critic is the professional listener, presumed to have an equipment of perception, judgment, and taste which the nonprofessional listeners who read him don't have, and which he uses to make them aware of what they might miss in a piece of music or a performance. Actually, almost all of the people who have written about music as though they had that equipment have not had it—have lacked the judgment and taste needed to evaluate correctly what they have heard, and even the perception needed to hear it accurately. There have been exceptions, three of them outstanding: on the one hand Donald Tovey, a professionally trained musician and scholar who wrote with an accuracy of mind and a literary skill not characteristic of musical professionals; and on the other hand two literary professionals with extraordinary sensitivity to music, Bernard Shaw in the 1890's, and W. J. Turner in the 1920's and 30's. And in 1960 I learned of another outstanding exception when readers sent me clippings from the *Spectator* of articles by David Cairns—impressive in their perception and judgment,

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their intense personal involvement, their liveliness of mind and literary style—about the Covent Garden production of Berlioz's *Les Troyens*. Clippings of Cairns's articles continued to arrive irregularly until a few years ago, when he appeared to have given up journalism for other writing: notes for Colin Davis's recordings of Berlioz; the translation of Berlioz's *Memoirs* that was universally praised as a remarkable equivalent in English of Berlioz's vivid and impassioned French, but that in fact had Berlioz writing in the unimpassioned manner of a well-bred Londoner. (*"Que d'abominables sottises j'ai entendu dire aux uns et aux autres sur ces merveilles de savoir et d'inspiration!"* Berlioz exclaimed about the response in Paris to Beethoven's symphonies; "I have heard them airing the most lamentable nonsense about these marvels of beauty and technical mastery," Cairns had him remark.)

But now a collection of Cairns's critical writing has been published here which includes some—about Beethoven's *Fidelio*, Verdi's *Falstaff*, Mozart's *Idomeneo*, Schubert's large-scale works—that is as good as I have ever read. Its high value derives from the fact that Cairns has managed not to do what other writers usually do when they have occasion to hear the music, which is to listen with minds filled with the generally accepted ideas about it, and therefore to hear what those ideas lead them to expect to hear. He has been able, when listening, to keep everything out of his mind except the music reaching his ears; and he reports what he heard and the conclusions it led him to that contradict the generally accepted ideas. Thus *Idomeneo* was regarded for almost two centuries as "a noble fossil" by those whose minds were too full of their knowledge of what made *opera seria* a lifeless genre to be able to hear the life in Mozart's music; whereas Cairns, having listened to this music, writes: "To know *Idomeneo* is to discover one of the marvels of dramatic music."

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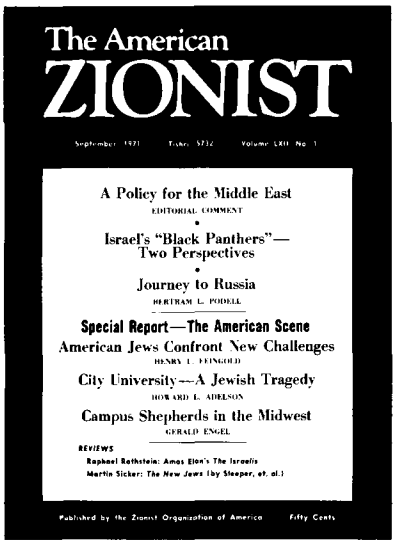

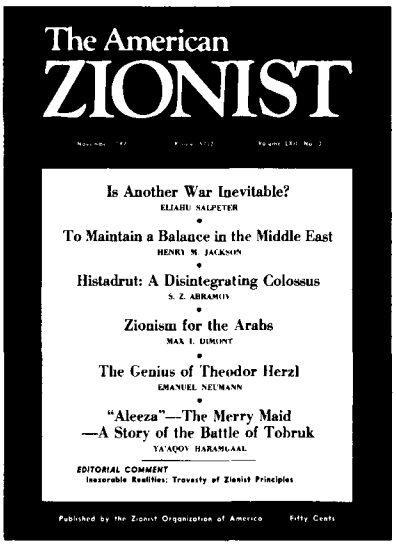

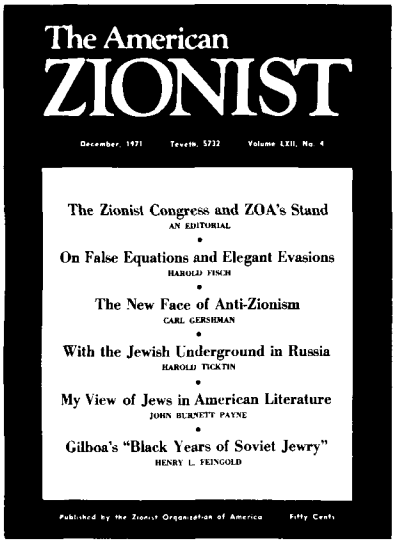

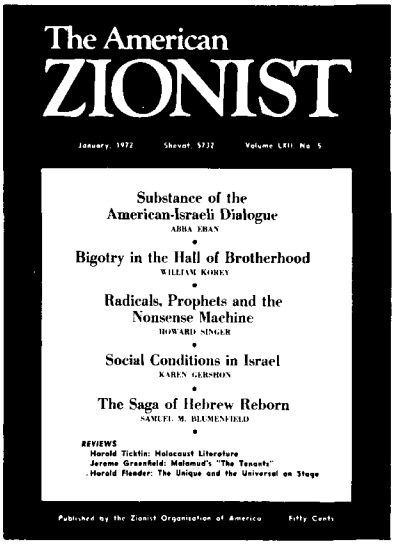

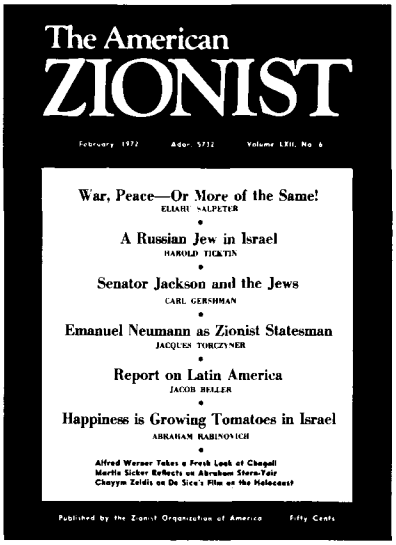
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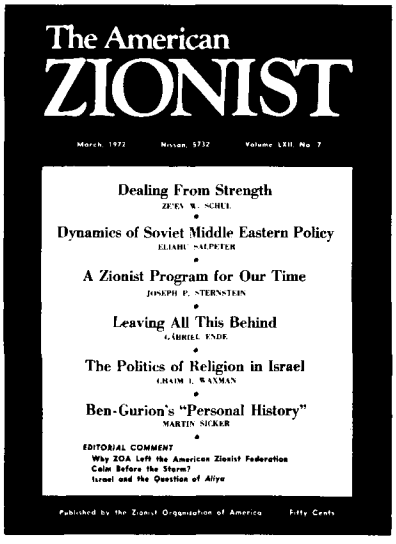

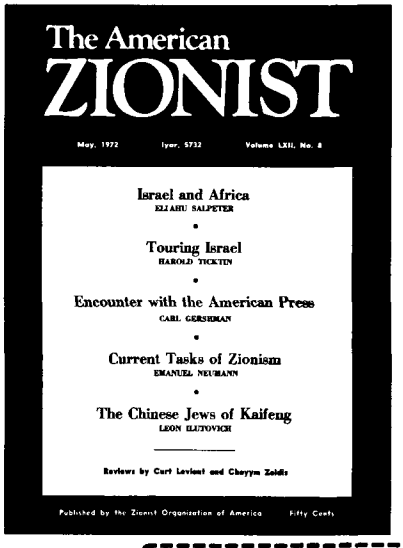

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hands of the particular composer. It is above all a test we must not forget when the composer is Mozart. With Mozart, the genre is what he makes of it. . . . In *Idomeneo* we watch Mozart making of it very largely what he wants. No work more strikingly demonstrates his ability to take a convention and put it to his own transcendent purposes. Far from being inhibited by it, he uses it to create music which rarely falters in its dramatic impetus and which is not surpassed in grandeur and intensity by any of the later masterpieces.

And he makes a similar point about *Fidelio*, which is "a flawed work by a composer of genius wrestling with an uncongenial art form" for those who, listening to it, hear the mixture of genres which they know from the generally accepted idea of *Fidelio* to be a major flaw in it. But Cairns's listening has provided him with the evidence he presents for his belief that the work is one of "the supreme masterpieces in any medium," and specifically "a dramatic masterpiece" whose mixture of genres represents not Beethoven's inexperience in opera but "the freedom of mastery [that] uses whatever [the work] needs, to say what it has to say. . . . The work is true to its own laws. They are the only ones that matter." Moreover, having listened also to the original version of 1805, Cairns is able to demonstrate—in reply to the "*Urtext*-obsessed" musicologists' demand for a return to that original version—that the stripping away of its "beautiful elaboration and conventional repetition" produces the "devastating directness of the final version we know," and to characterize "the clear-sighted ruthlessness of the musical revisions that produced the final form" as "a feat of artistic discipline with few equals in the history of music."

More important is Cairns's similar dealing with Schubert, since it is concerned with what impels Cairns to ask, "Is there a comparable case of a great composer—one that many would unhesitatingly place among the half-dozen supreme creators . . . whom commentators feel so free to patronize; a master who is so often approached in the expectation of finding weaknesses?" Cairns can see how the surface appearance of ease and abundance gave plausibility to the view of Schubert as a purely instinctive composer who achieved extraordinarily beautiful lyrical utterance by inspiration, not by disciplined thought; and how this view could raise doubts of his capacity for the large-scale construction that required such thought. But these doubts should have been removed by "the towering form of the Great C major Symphony, a work of ferocious mastery on the grandest scale"—and indeed by the other large-scale works. And what critical opinion heard in these works as evidence of Schubert's inability to handle the forms he had taken over from his predecessors, Cairns can hear as evidence rather of his handling them in his own way. Listening with the belief that Schubert, like every artist, was entitled to that own way, and must be judged by what it achieved in each particular work, Cairns presents convincing evidence for his conclusion that

> short though it was, his life was long enough for the naive, instinctive genius to develop into an articulate and single-minded artist, and to achieve, in a dozen richly original masterpieces, a disciplining and organization of his miraculous talent, an assertion of creative self-reliance and pertinacity . . . that was perhaps the most miraculous thing of all.

I HAVE so far been discussing the statements of Cairns that are confirmed by my own experience (the critic writes not what is true, period, but what is true for *him*, and what becomes true for the reader who finds it is verified by what he hears); and I must add that some of the things he says—for example about the greatness of Michael Tippett's opera *A Midsummer Marriage* and Elgar's First Symphony—are contradicted for me by what I heard. Similarly my experience enables me to recognize the faults Cairns describes in the Zeffirelli production of *Don Giovanni* and to share his disapproval of it, but causes me to share Victor Gollancz's disapproval, rather than Cairns's approval, of the manner of staging opera initiated by Wieland Wagner at Bayreuth. It enables me also to appreciate the accurate perception Cairns shows in his pointing out of the flaw in Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's otherwise admirable singing of *Lieder*, and in his description of Herbert von Karajan's unadmirable use of his impressive gifts; but to recall, on the other hand, the actual nervelessness and feebleness of what Cairns cites as the marvels of the old recorded Wilhelm Furtwängler performance of Act 1 of *Die Walküre*. Moreover, I hear with Cairns the Furtwängler "idiosyncrasies" of tempo that destroy shape in the music; but not the revelations, in place of this outer shape, of "the music's inner life," its inner organic unity. And I find a misstatement of the issue between Furtwängler and Toscanini ("who despised him," Cairns mentions) in the further comment that sets against each other Toscanini's alleged insistence that a performance produce only and exactly the notes in the score, and Furtwängler's search for the life and organic unity beyond and around the notes; Toscanini's alleged insistence that adherence to the score produced the one correct performance of the work, and Furtwängler's belief that the score was "not a blueprint but an encouragement to re-creation" which might produce a variety of conclusions. (Even his destructive idiosyncrasies of tempo must therefore command respect, according to Cairns, since they show there is no one correct way of performing a work; but how these destructive idiosyncrasies can show the possibility of any correct way of performing a work is something only the Cairns mind can see.)

Actually, Toscanini didn't hold the beliefs Cairns attributes to him. He did insist that the score was what a conductor had to begin with; but his understanding that there was something the conductor had to add to what was in the score was evident in his statement to me once about the need, in performing Mozart, to know what had to be done between the *piano* in the score here and the *forte* eight measures later; in the profusion of

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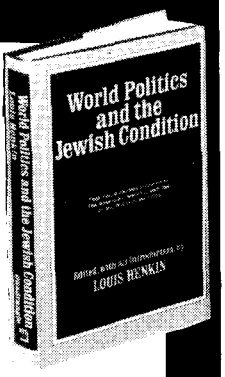
subtle inflections marked between the *pianos* and the *fortes* in his score of Mozart's Divertimento K.287; in the actual profusion of inflection between them that is to be heard in his recorded performance of the piece. And the evidence of his understanding that this way of dealing with the score could result in more than one correct performance was his delight in the performances of Guido Cantelli that adhered as strictly to the score as Toscanini's but were strikingly different from his. On the other hand, listening in Salzburg to the beginning of Furtwängler's performance of Beethovan's Ninth, Toscanini despised the conductor who couldn't get the two horns to play the two notes of their opening fifth precisely together; and continuing to listen as one whose own performances exhibited, in W. J. Turner's words, "subtle variation of tempo . . . always in the service of [a] shape . . . derived from the rightful expression of the music," Toscanini despised the musician whose extravagances in variation of tempo and volume produced distortions of shape and excesses in expression.

It is worth noting that Furtwängler responded by professing disdain for the technical accuracy that he said (to the conductor Hans Schwieger) fitted Toscanini only for the conducting of a military band, and maintaining that "I begin to make music where this man stops." One can understand this being said by a vain man accustomed to triumph after triumph with the public, who could not endure this public's lessened response to him—notably in New York in 1926—after it had heard Toscanini, and could not forgive the man responsible for what he felt as an intolerable humiliation. But it is astounding that it was believed by others who could be expected to hear that Toscanini did not stop with technical accuracy. And the explanation I have arrived at is that they were the dupes of an extraordinarily gifted musical demagogue who was able to get himself thought of as—in Cairns's words—"one of the supreme interpretative musicians of the 20th century."



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Reviewed by EDWARD GROSSMAN

WHAT comes to mind first, and most vividly, is the way, during his last years, Roberto Clemente would roll and jerk his head preparatory to stepping into the batter's box. Sometimes he would repeat this tic-like movement between pitches. It was strange to see and rather ugly, and Clemente said he did it to ease the pain in his neck, variously ascribed to muscle spasms, pinched nerves, and arthritis. Some pitchers called it psychological warfare, swearing that the more pain Clemente claimed he was in, the more nearly impossible it was to keep him from getting a hit. But though he was not above trying to rattle the opposition by all means, there is no doubt that Clemente's body gave him degrees of anguish as he grew older (he died in a plane crash at the age of thirty-eight), and that in part he brought this on himself by the way he played.

Though wonderfully gifted by nature, he did not often give the impression of ease. You could watch him closely for nine innings, and seldom see him take that typical posture of the athlete, limp as a rag doll, ready to move with easy economy of motion. He seemed both supremely self-assured, and very tense. True, in his position in right field, he would make catches of routine and even fairly difficult fly balls at navel-level, basket-style, in the casual, boyish, joyful manner that Willie Mays popularized. But I believe this was deceptive. Clemente "played" with at least as much grim determination to prove something to the world as with the simple juvenile joy of running, leaping, and hitting. He was not careful, either, though he would sometimes ask manager Danny Murtaugh to let him sit out a couple of games. He would crash full-

EDWARD GROSSMAN, *who writes on a wide variety of social and cultural affairs, reviewed* My Turn at Bat *by Ted Williams in the November 1969* COMMENTARY.

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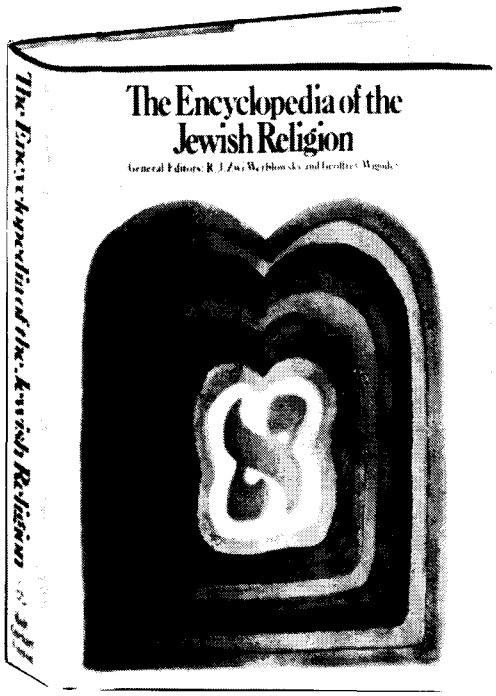

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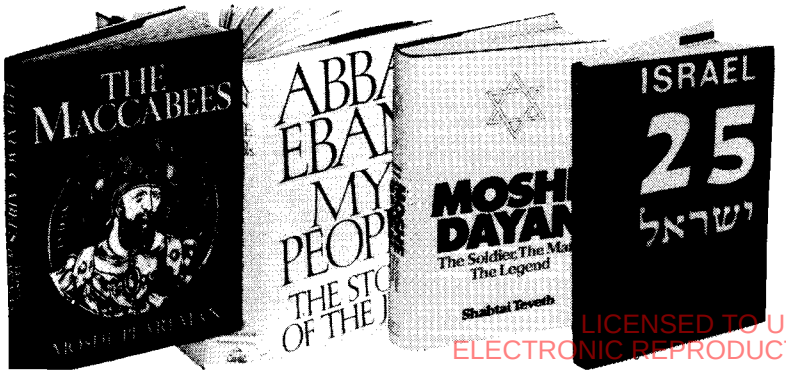

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speed into fences if that was necessary to convert what looked like an extra-base hit into a long out; he would execute daring, grueling maneuvers on the basepaths; unlike Ted Williams, to whom he can be compared as the best hitter of his time, Clemente was not a picture of grace and control at the plate—often he would spin around completely and fall down chasing a bad pitch. But more often than not, he would connect with a bad pitch for a line drive. Arnold Hano, in his biography of Clemente, one of the least egregious of the spate of potboilers that have come out since Clemente's death, quotes Sandy Koufax as saying that Clemente was the "strangest hitter in all baseball. Figure him one way and he'd kill you another. . . ." Yet splendidly endowed as he was, Clemente cruelly punished himself doing these things, and compounded the damage, for in fact he gave himself almost no respite, playing winter ball in Puerto Rico when most other major leaguers were resting.

What was it Clemente thought he had to prove? Perhaps it is foolish to try to answer a question like this with assurance about a dead man who was never observed except at a distance, in the theatrical situation of performing in front of thousands or millions of people, and who, when he tried to express himself in words, stood on the other side of a language barrier. Evidently he wanted to be recognized beyond a doubt as the best at what he did—"the greatest"—and to receive the requisite tokens of recognition: not only a big salary, but awards, trophies, testimonials. Yet this seems only typical of professional athletes, especially the best of them, who retain a childlike need for prizes. It hardly distinguished Clemente from many others who played well along with him or against him, but did not carry the nationalistic burden that Clemente did. For whether or not he chose to, and no matter how much it actually determined him, it is a fact that Clemente, even before he became the national hero of Puerto Rico, was the island's favorite son, the one who went north to the strange and sometimes intimidating mainland and made good spectacularly.

That he did so playing in Pittsburgh puts a twist on the story. It was a peculiar fate for the first Latin superstar to make his way in a town with a relatively small, quiet black population, and no Latins to speak of. The sparse, tough crowds that used to come to old Forbes Field, where Clemente broke in with the sad-sack Pirate team of the 50's, had their origins a generation or two behind them in the bleaker reaches of Poland and Serbo-Croatia. The young rookie's beautiful ebony face (see the photographs in Hano's book) and nonexistent English did not *ipso facto* make these hyphenated Americans, with their deep ethnic prides and meannesses, his enthusiastic fans. The Pirates then were an almost all-white team, and it was for the likes of Dick Groat, Ted Kluzewski, Don Hoak, Dale Long, and Vernon Law that the Slavs and hillbillies would come in out of the surrounding mill towns and coal fields to yell and moan demonstratively. In the beginning, Clemente found himself in a spot not unlike that which Jackie Robinson had been in a few years earlier in Brooklyn, and it is possible that, like Robinson, Clemente felt that he was an emissary and that his was a test case, and consequently he believed he was obliged to be continuously brilliant, if it meant falling down, sliding head first, or sprinting into brick walls.

Whatever this hypothesis is worth, Clemente's brilliance forced the older Pittsburghers to applaud, even if grudgingly at the start. Their children, sporting longer hair, in tune with changing times, learned to line up for autographs and call out "*Arriba!*" in a Tri-State accent. The Pirates became contenders, won the World Championship in 1960. Clemente got to be known to serious fans around the National League, and fleetingly he was on view once every summer from coast to coast (and later, by satellite, in Puerto Rico) playing in the mid-season All-Star Game. But he was also on record as being truculently resentful at being passed over, he thought, for the Most Valuable Player prize, and the emoluments, financial and spiritual, of interview shows, *Time* covers, and shaving-cream plugs, on account, he said, of his skin color and place of birth. Perhaps by reason of malice, misunderstanding, or prejudice, probably also because by accident Clemente's contract had been bought by a provincial team, not the Yankees or the Mets, he had to wait until near the end of his career to get the respectful publicity from the *Yanquis* he deserved and craved for himself and the people whose emissary he was cast as. He achieved celebrity status on the mainland, as if instantly, after seventeen years in the majors, thanks to his remarkable performance (twelve hits in twenty-nine at-bats) in the 1971 World Series, witnessed by sixty million Americans on television. Now he was showered with tokens: Clemente had his Appreciation Nite at the new Three Rivers Stadium, and another one at Shea, to which the immigrants to the tenements and projects of Spanish Harlem, the South Bronx, and Jersey came to pay him homage.

When he died, Clemente had secured a firm claim on the affection and loyalty of Pittsburghers (the millionaire owner of the Pirates, John Galbreath, named his prize-winning racehorse "Roberto"). The pushover white team that Clemente had started with had been transformed, during his time, into the strongest in the major leagues, several platoons deep in talent, and sometimes when the Pirates take the field these days, all nine starters are black or Latin. Toward the end, Clemente was considered the captain and leader, as well as the superstar of this team. But if his death came as a rude shock to the unlikely town where he made his mark, it seems to have been nothing less than a national calamity for Puerto Ricans, wherever they live. There were days of mourning, and televised Requiem Masses, with Clemente's young widow and children focused on, reminiscent of the lurid, dignified proceedings in the U.S. during John Kennedy's funeral. The dead man was extravagantly eulogized. He was quoted as having said, "Any time you have the opportunity to accomplish something for somebody who is less fortunate than you and you don't do it, you are wasting your time on earth." It was revealed that on multiple occasions, he had enacted

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the hoary American cliché of Sports Star Takes Time Out to Visit Hospitalized Child, but had insisted on doing it in private. It was recalled that his fondest dream was to build a Sports City where poor Puerto Rican youths could be helped in time—a sort of super Police Athletic League—and in the wake of his death, the Pirate owners gave half-a-million dollars to begin construction of this great hulk of social work.

THE formula hyperboles, boring and predictable ("he will never be forgotten") that abound on the death of a "star" and that Hano, a sportswriter, has recourse to, should not obscure the fact that Clemente acted out, perhaps for the last time in the history of what is no longer the national pastime, the role of the baseball star symbolizing by his ascendancy the inclusion of a minority group into the American patchwork. This, at a time when most white and even black players are content or obliged to be businessmen and "swingers," and baseball is only one professional game among many.

It is undeniable, too, that baseball sustained a loss with Clemente's disappearance that it can scarcely afford, even if it might be said with some justice that in losing a drawing card it gained a legend to add to its stock. Besides Johnny Bench and Hank Aaron, who is there left whom the average fan will go out of his way to pay to see play? Clemente was one such, because he lunged to the far distant side of the plate to spray line drives to all fields, because he was capable of pretending to bobble the ball in right field, only to wing a strike to first, catching the baserunner flat and silly. For providing such fine and harmless entertainment to those who have a taste for it, he will be remembered for a time. And because he died at the top of his form, on board a plane loaded with relief supplies he had collected for the people hurt and hungry in Managua, Nicaragua, where there had been an earthquake, it can be maintained, without naiveté or fear of contradiction, that so far as anyone's death can be, his was noble.

Collective Living

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY IN THE KIBBUTZ. By YONINA TALMON. *Harvard University Press. 266 pp. $12.00.*

Reviewed by MARSHALL SKLARE

WITH certain exceptions, academic interest in the kibbutz has by and large not been impelled by a desire to understand the internal workings of this institution, still less by a desire to comprehend how it grew out of a Jewish society, or what its role is in the national life of Israel. Rather, the kibbutz has beckoned to researchers mainly as an institution which seems to have dealt successfully with problems that have defied solution in Western countries. The roster of such problems is familiar: the inadequacies of the nuclear family, the alienation of the young, the inequality of women, the oppressiveness and monotony of labor. With the widespread appearance of both urban and rural communes throughout the United States and elsewhere, the kibbutz, as the basic model of communal living, and one whose viability is by now beyond dispute, has come into a kind of limelight. Even those who have not themselves been drawn to collective living have felt that the kibbutz has important lessons to teach. And indeed in recent years Israel's kibbutzim have been virtually inundated by an army of foreign, especially American, researchers.

With all the attention paid it by outsiders, it is hardly to be wondered at that the kibbutz has long been a focal point of interest to Israel's social scientists as well, quite apart from the issue of their own sympathies with kibbutz ideology, or their feelings about the contribution made by the kibbutzim to Israeli society. In general, Israeli scholars have been more circumspect than foreigners in their approach to the kibbutz. Knowing only too well that many of Israel's social problems still

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remain unsolved, they have attempted to stick closer to the institution itself, avoiding the temptation to view it as an exemplary answer to the social ills of Western man. But in any case there is no denying that the kibbutz has been a great boon, a veritable natural resource, for Israel's social scientists, offering as it does almost limitless opportunities for scholarly study in such areas as the family, educational psychology, industrial sociology, child psychology, even military sociology (the kibbutzim supply a considerable proportion of the officer corps of the Israeli army, as well as a large number of air-force pilots). But despite all the vast amounts of research done over the years by Israeli, American, and European social scientists, it is generally conceded that the definitive study of the kibbutz still remains to be written.

The logical author of that study, there is no doubt, would have been the late Yonina Talmon, the gifted and sensitive observer of Israeli society whose career was cut short by her untimely death in 1966 at the age of forty-three. Born in Petach Tikva in 1923, Mrs. Talmon was educated at the Hebrew University. She took her doctorate under Martin Buber, and went on to teach at the university. Though passionately devoted to the study of Israeli society, she was also well-acquainted with developments in the social sciences outside Israel, having studied at the London School of Economics and taught at Harvard. In the mid-50's, by which time her work had come to be increasingly focused on the kibbutz, Mrs. Talmon initiated a multifaceted research program under the joint sponsorship of the Hebrew University and the Federation of Kevutzot and Kibbutzim. She continued to be actively involved in this project until her final illness. As each segment of the overall plan was completed, she would publish the results in various American, European, and Israeli journals. At the time of her death, seven articles had appeared, and an eighth was ready for publication. These have now been assembled in a memorial volume by Mrs. Talmon's husband, the leading biblical scholar

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Shmaryahu Talmon. In addition to the articles—which range over such topics as marriage, family structure, aspects of communal upbringing, and the formation of elites on the kibbutz—the volume also includes a methodological appendix, "The Sociological Study of the Kibbutz," which Mrs. Talmon wrote in the 1950's as a guide to her students and collaborators, and an introduction by Shmuel Eisenstadt of the sociology department of the Hebrew University.

Viewed as a totality the volume is, of course, something less than that comprehensive analysis of kibbutz society which Mrs. Talmon had envisioned as her life's work. It has the shortcomings to be expected of a posthumous collection of articles originally published in a wide variety of journals. There is a certain sense of unevenness, and some overlapping of material; no attempt has been made to synthesize the eight disparate pieces into a comprehensive whole. Yet for all this, the work displays remarkable solidity, as well as a welcome modesty of aspiration. Mrs Talmon was obviously an admirer of collective living who hoped that her work would be helpful to the kibbutzim in what she called "the search for new means of adapting collective principles and ideals to changing social conditions." Yet she made no extravagant claims for the kibbutz, nor did she display any desire to foist it as a model on other societies. In fact, she was far more concerned with investigating those problems which the kibbutz had not yet solved than she was in promoting it as a utopia to be emulated. What distinguished her most, perhaps, as a student of the kibbutz, was her seriousness about the subject, which expressed itself in the sustained interest she brought to it throughout her career.

THE sixth essay in this volume, "Aging in a Revolutionary Society," which originally appeared in 1961 in the *American Journal of Sociology*, is as good an example as any of Yonina Talmon's method. The essay begins with the observation that the kibbutz seems on the face of it to have solved most of the problems of old age which bedevil Western societies. Thus, senior citizens on the kibbutz have total economic security (unmarred, Mrs. Talmon might have added, by fears of inflation); they have ready access to whatever health care or medical services they may need; and they are spared—when the time comes for retirement from work—the abrupt shift from accustomed routine which makes the retirement process so painful elsewhere. Because the kibbutz can arrange for lighter schedules and less taxing jobs without too much difficulty, the elderly need not stop working all at once but can taper off gradually. In addition, they do not suffer that terrible sense of being thrust out which is so much a feature of aging in the West; there are no "retirement communities" or old-age homes in kibbutz society, to cut the elderly off from lifelong associations. Finally, since kibbutz ideology encourages the younger generation to settle in the parents' kibbutz rather than to move elsewhere, many older kibbutz members have the consolation of being surrounded, in old age, by children and grandchildren. The net result, to quote Mrs. Talmon, is that "elderly and older people are . . . spared much of the insecurity and dependence entailed in aging."

Are we to conclude, then, that growing old on the kibbutz is a painless process? No sooner has Mrs. Talmon finished painting this relatively idyllic picture than she proceeds to question it. It turns out that there are, indeed, many difficulties involved, though they are of a different order from the ones experienced in other societies. To begin with, there is the strain of being old in a society which is youth-centered and future-oriented. Mrs. Talmon notes an irony here: today's kibbutz elders were once rebels who glorified the creativity and potential of youth and extolled the virtues of revolutionary change. Now, however, in order to maintain the kibbutz and assure its future, these same elders find themselves abandoning the revolutionary and utopian ethos of their youth and stressing instead the virtues of stability and continuity. In counseling the younger generation to remain loyal to their own particular kibbutz, for example, and to give up the pursuit of new utopias, the elderly must sound in their own ears rather more conservative than they would like.

Mrs. Talmon discerns an even more serious strain arising in another quarter. As is well known, work and productivity are among the most compelling values in kibbutz life. Kibbutz members—and particularly the older generation—believe not only that strenuous physical work is an economic necessity, but that it also possesses enormous ideological and even religious significance. Work represents—in the view of A. D. Gordon, who left so deep an imprint on kibbutz thinking—a kind of ritual of self-purification, an act of emancipation from the "parasitical," otherworldly existence of the Jew in the Diaspora. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that old age, as a time of declining productivity and dependence on the labor or others, should be viewed with misgivings on the kibbutz. The very sanctity accorded to labor has the effect of promoting a sense of superfluousness and insecurity among the elderly.

Despite her unequivocal admiration for the kibbutz as a social enterprise, Mrs. Talmon never fails to point out those of its social arrangements which seem to her better ordered elsewhere. Thus, she makes one of her most telling points in contrasting the psychological situation of the retired worker in the industrialized Western countries with that of his counterpart on the kibbutz. Both are receiving some form of compensation for the years during which they worked. The kibbutz member is being generously supported by his kibbutz; the worker in the Western countries (or, for that matter, the Israeli worker who does not live on the kibbutz) is, typically, receiving some form of pension from the state, along with whatever other benefits his union or company may provide.

The Western worker experiences no sense of unease upon receiving such payments. He feels no sense of dependence on young-

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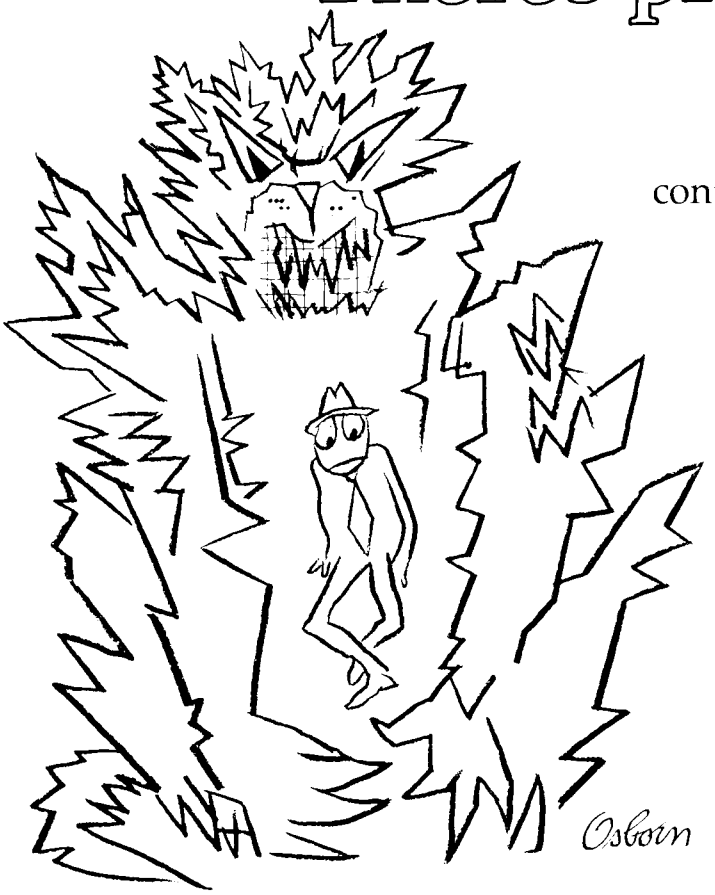

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er workers who are still in the labor force (and whose contributions are crucial to keeping the system solvent); and he certainly feels no guilt about receiving a check in his mailbox which has been processed by a computer in some distant city. In the small society which is the kibbutz, on the other hand, there is no impersonal bureaucracy to administer the system, and no faceless army of workers to keep it solvent. The older person who is no longer working realizes quite literally that he is being supported by the younger couple in the next room. As Mrs. Talmon puts it, "dependence on the kibbutz is not neutral and anonymous." Try though he may to convince himself that he has earned his retirement by long years of unremitting toil, the aging kibbutz member can hardly help but perceive his retirement in terms of personal dependency on those who are still maximally-productive members of his kibbutz.

Continuing to reverse our expectations, Mrs. Talmon concludes her essay on "Aging in a Revolutionary Society" with an intriguing comparison between the two groups of aged persons who live on the kibbutz. The first group are full members of the kibbutz, who joined it perhaps thirty, forty, or fifty years ago. (If the kibbutz is not too old they may even be among its founders.) The second group are in effect quasi-members of the kibbutz—the aging parents of kibbutz members who have been invited to spend their declining years with their children. By all the rules of logic, one would expect the quasi-members to have far greater problems of adjusting than the full-members. They are novices at communitarian living, undertaking a radically new way of life at an advanced age, and they are relatively isolated even in the tight social structure of the kibbutz. Surprisingly enough, however, Mrs. Talmon discovers that the quasi-members are considerably more contented with their lot than are the full members, and she explains how this has happened to come about.

The [quasi-members] are not imbued with the prevalent faith in youth, work, and productivity, and—being marginal—they are less susceptible to the pressure of public opinion. Having come to the kibbutz near or after retirement age they are grateful for the possibility to work part-time and do not regard this as a comedown. As they do not set their hopes high, they are easily satisfied and enjoy many of the amenities of aging in the collective without suffering from the concomitant strains. [However], the aging full members who are an integral part of the system and adhere to the dominant values, find it much more difficult to avoid the inherent pressures and strains.

Mrs. Talmon observes that "the kibbutzim tended at first to disregard the spreading discontent among their aged and to ignore the symptoms of strain. Those who voiced resentment and pressed for change were usually regarded as incorrigible malcontents." She offers a number of proposals for alleviating some of the sources of strain, including an inter-kibbutz old-age insurance scheme which would pay members a regular pension upon retirement and thus "enhance their feeling of security and independence." (The current approach is to include kibbutz members in the government's pension scheme.) And in conclusion, she stresses that the "difficulties inherent in aging in the kibbutz are directly related to the overemphasis on youth, on work, and on productivity."

KIBBUTZ society as it emerges from Mrs. Talmon's sensitive and nuanced portrait is quite different from the stereotype we have grown accustomed to in the standard literature on the subject. Yet for all the strains and limitations exposed by Mrs. Talmon, the kibbutz she describes is considerably more believable as a social arrangement, and none the less impressive as an experiment—on the whole an amazingly successful one—in communal organization. Mrs. Talmon's book should succeed in setting new standards for the proper understanding of this institution.

Neo-Abolitionism

KIND AND USUAL PUNISHMENT: THE PRISON BUSINESS. By JESSICA MITFORD. *Knopf. 340 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by MARC F. PLATTNER

SCARCELY a single social critic has a good word for the American penal system; its glaring defects, virtually all agree, stand in urgent need of change. The ranks of the critics have now been joined by Jessica Mitford, who brings to the task her special skills as a muckraker and polemicist, and the result, as might be expected, is a scathing indictment of the American way of dealing with convicted criminals. Yet *Kind and Usual Punishment* is not merely another cataloguing of the standard prison abuses so often condemned by reformers—crowded and unhealthy living conditions, brutal treatment by guards, inadequate training and educational programs, etc. Miss Mitford recites these complaints, but her chief target lies elsewhere. The force of her indignation is directed not at the antiquated and underfunded prisons that everyone deplores, but rather at "those large, well-ordered, highly-financed prison systems that have incorporated as their stated policy reforms fought for over the decades: rehabilitation as opposed to punishment, utilization of the latest scientific therapy techniques, classification of prisoners based on their performance in prison, a chance for every offender to return to the community as soon as he is ready." *Kind and Usual Punishment* is noteworthy above all for its attack on reform and reformers.

This assault takes a double form. First, Miss Mitford does battle with the school of thought that explains crime in terms of mental or social illness, and that therefore defines the goal of the prison as the rehabilitation of "deviants." According to this view, prisons should be the jurisdiction of a corps of professional personnel—

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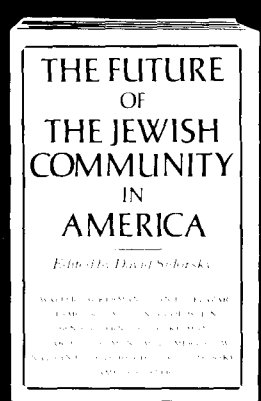
psychologists, socologists, and the like—who are adept at the "diagnosis" and "treatment" of the "sick"; convicts are entrusted to their care for an indeterminate period and released only if and when pronounced "cured." Miss Mitford is unsparing in her scorn for experimental institutions organized on this model, noting that the practical result of such arrangements is that the prisoner's fate rests entirely upon the whim of the "experts" who treat him. Furthermore, the notion that criminality is a medical problem—something for which the criminal is not morally responsible—can serve to justify ever more chilling "behavior-modification" techniques. If Miss Mitford is to be believed, drug therapy on unwilling prisoners has already begun, and neurosurgery is next.

The second thrust of Miss Mitford's attack is summed up in the book's subtitle: "The Prison Business." The author argues that the increased spending for corrections demanded by reformers winds up benefiting inmates very little, while lining the pockets of prison officials, social scientists, and those who supply the correctional system with various goods and services. Miss Mitford is particularly critical of the widespread call for the construction of new prisons, suggesting that this would mean a "vast expansion of the existing prison empire." If all the money that such a building program would require were actually spent, she warns, the prisons would *have* to be kept filled to capacity; otherwise, taxpayers might revolt at the high costs of incarceration, and prison officials might lose their jobs.

Having made her case for the inadequacy and, to some extent, even the perniciousness of reform, Miss Mitford comes to her proposed alternative to the present system: "abolition," a term deliberately chosen for its association with the anti-slavery movement of the 19th century. Quite simply, Miss Mitford advocates that prisons be done away with entirely—nothing less, it would appear, than the decriminalization of crime is her notion of how best to deal with the problems of the American penal system.

The Future of the Jewish Community in America

Edited by David Sidorsky



In this fascinating volume—which will surely prove indispensable to all students of contemporary Jewish society—American Jewry sits, so to speak, for its collective portrait: the past is assessed, the present described, the future contemplated. It is an effort prompted by the growing questioning that discerning Jews have begun to manifest regarding the continuity of Jewish identity and the quality of Jewish life. For American Jews are no longer a community of immigrants and sons of immigrants seeking to integrate into the general society. Today, American Jews find themselves almost totally acculturated, part and parcel of the mainstream of American life—a development not without its tensions.

The new situation has motivated new self-examination on the part of many in the Jewish community. It was with this recognition and with a sense of shared concern about the character and direction of American Jewish life that the American Jewish Committee convened a Task Force on the Future of the Jewish Community in America. The chapters in this volume were originally prepared as position papers for the deliberations of the Task Force. Their authors represent the best informed thought on crucial areas of concern for the Jewish community.

In a wide-ranging discussion ("Judaism and the Revolution of Modernity"), David Sidorsky, the editor of the volume, sets the current problems in perspective as he demonstrates the effects (sometimes damaging) of modernism on the Jewish experience. It is a discussion which Nathan Rotenstreich acutely pursues in his essay, "Emancipation and Its Aftermath."

These two masterful essays, along with Ben Halpern's "Zion in the Mind of American Jews," constitute the philosophical underpinnings of the volume. In another, more descriptive vein, Sidney Goldstein draws a demographic profile of American Jewry, while Wolfe Kelman undertakes a description of organized Jewish religious life.

Jewish education is the subject of two essays: "The Jewish School System in the United States," by Walter Ackerman; and "Toward a General Theory of Jewish Education," by Seymour Fox. Finally, Daniel Elazar contributes what is, in effect, a "who's who" of American Jewry's decision-makers.

The essays in this volume, ten in all, represent the best in American Jewish self-understanding. They identify and examine, in a fashion unparalleled to date, the institutions, tendencies, and programs that shape the character of American Jewry. They also form the basis for a new agenda for American Jewish action in the years to come.

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Although Miss Mitford mounts her attack on liberal reformers from a radical perspective, one cannot help but be struck by how closely her critique of the "prison business" resembles the analyses of other government activities by social critics who have been dubbed neo-conservatives. Similarly, her rejection of the mental-illness theory of crime and her distrust of social scientists and bureaucrats closely correspond to traditional conservative positions. (As if to underline her break with the liberal consensus in these matters, Miss Mitford aims a barrage of derision at former Attorney General Ramsey Clark.) The generally favorable reception that *Kind and Usual Punishment* has received in liberal circles is but one more sign of the apparent exhaustion of the reformist tradition that has for so long been at the heart of American liberalism. Yet even a cursory examination of the arguments she advances in her final chapter, "Reform or Abolition," reveals the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of the abolitionist cause.

Miss Mitford's contention is that prisons do not fulfill any of the objectives they are intended to serve: rehabilitation, protection of the public (by confining criminals), or deterrence (by dissuading potential lawbreakers with the threat of imprisonment). But the case she presents with regard to the latter two objectives is hardly compelling. Her own contention that rehabilitation does not work —that it does not succeed in reducing the rate of recidivism—constitutes an admission of the obvious fact that prisons do protect the public from the many prisoners who, if they were at large, would be committing crimes. As for deterrence, the logic of her argument would lead one to conclude that policemen are as unnecessary as prisons—a proposition no society is as yet prepared to concede.

There is, in addition, something disingenuous about Miss Mitford's assertion that prisons are useless, for the thrust of her book as a whole is to suggest not that prisons serve no purpose at all but that they serve a malign pupose, not that they are impotent but that they are only too potent a weapon, which one part of American society ("middle-class/white/middle-aged") uses to oppress another part ("poor/young/black/brown"). The real problem, in Miss Mitford's view, is not that the penal system fails to deter crime, but that crime itself is merely a label that the oppressors have given to activity that threatens their self-interest. In other words, all crimes are political crimes, and all prisoners are political prisoners. Her call for the abolition of prisons thus emerges as part of a larger plea for revolutionary change in American society that would throw off the yoke of the oppressors.

At times, Miss Mitford appears to hold that such change would make possible the establishment of a truly equitable system of criminal justice. Yet this optimistic view is contradicted by her most general statement on the subject: "Criminal law is essentially a reflection of the values, and a codification of the self-interest, and a method of control of the dominant class in *any given society*" (emphasis added). On the basis of this understanding of law (which was given its classic expression by Thrasymachus, the defender of injustice in Plato's *Republic*), criminal "justice" by its very nature must always and everywhere be an instrument of class oppression. Miss Mitford's wavering between these two conflicting views is responsible for the hopeless confusion of her analysis.

Miss Mitford's case for the abolition of prisons will not persuade anyone who believes that murder and rape are not political crimes —let alone anyone who accepts the essential legitimacy of American society and its laws. But if we grant the validity of Miss Mitford's brief against the mental- or social-illness theory of crime, where does that leave the debate over prisons? It is significant that, in her entire discussion, Miss Mitford makes scant reference to punishment, the (ironic) title of her book notwithstanding; there is no entry for the term in the index. And yet, isn't punishment the primary objective of prisons? Consider, for instance, the typical murderer as presented by Miss Mitford: someone who has killed a member of his family or a close acquaintance, is likely to regret his crime, and probably will never commit another. (One wonders, by the way, how Miss Mitford would ascribe a political dimension to a crime of this sort.) Even assuming that imprisonment of such a murderer would have no deterrent effect, would it not show a barbaric disregard for the life of the victim to let an act of this kind go unpunished?

Or take the example of a different kind of crime—the Watergate break-in and subsequent cover-up. Does not justice demand that those found guilty in this affair be sent to prison? Yet punishment is clearly the only goal that would be served by their incarceration. Regarding the individuals involved as candidates for rehabilitation would be only slightly less comic than seeing them as rebels against an oppressive ruling class. Finally, what about people who turn to crime as a way of making easy money—bank robbers, stock swindlers, organized crime figures, cops on the take? Is it just to let those who have prospered from their criminal activity get off scot-free when caught? If they pay no penalty, how can others who desire to increase their wealth be reasonably urged to stay within the law?

These examples are so obvious as to appear almost supererogatory. Unfortunately, however, much of the current debate over prisons is remarkable for its neglect of the obvious and its remoteness from common sense. The whole subject of punishment, as Miss Mitford's book attests, often goes unmentioned; yet to speak about prisons without reference to punishment is like conducting a discussion of schools with no mention of education. To affirm the legitimacy and necessity of punishment is not to solve the problems that beset American prisons, nor is it to defend their present shape. But if the requisite reforms are to be true improvements, they must, at the very least, be based on a view of the ordinary criminal not as a rebel-hero—as Miss Mitford would have it—but as a lawbreaker who must pay the penalty for his violation of the law.

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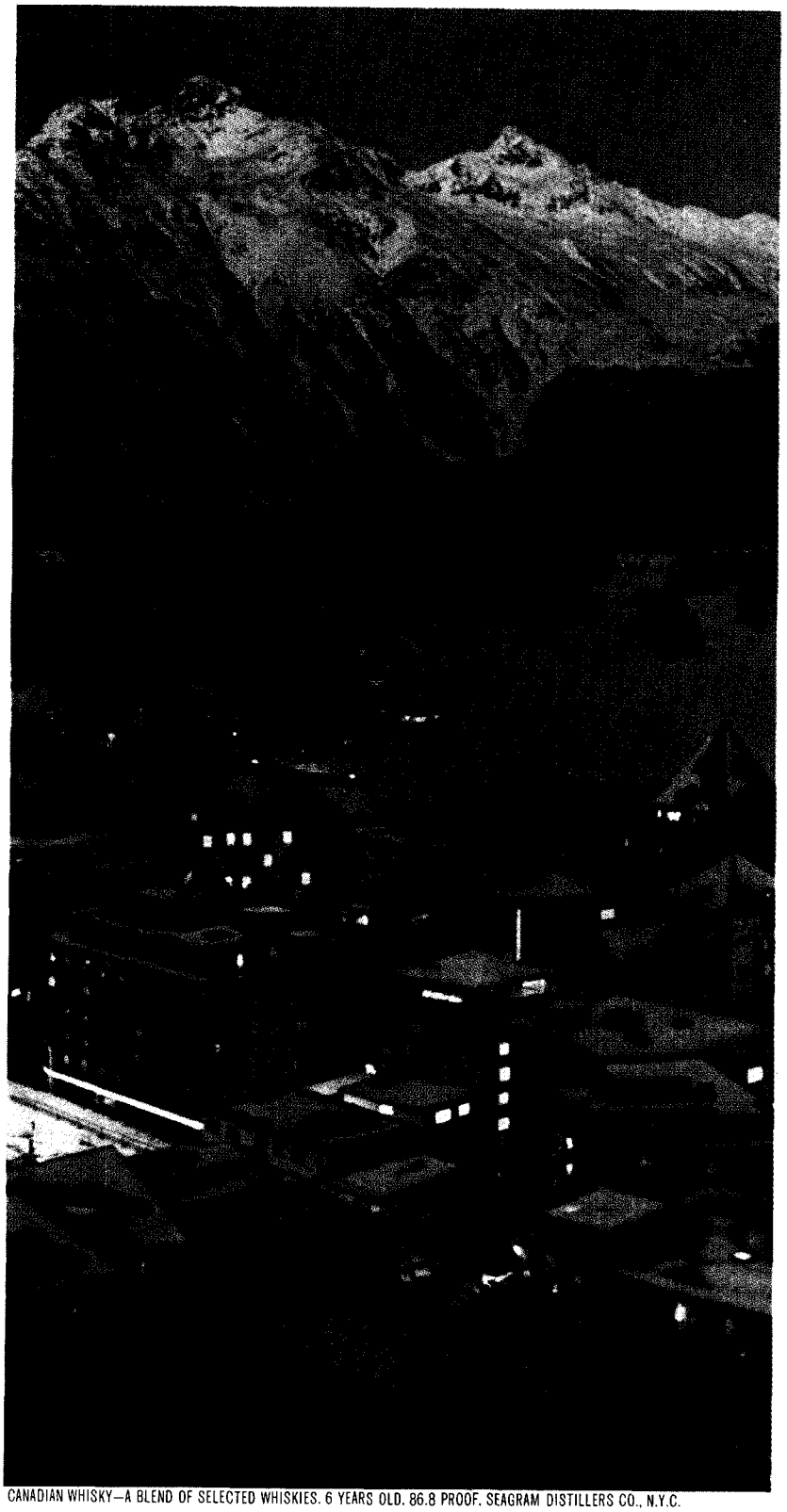

There is only one St. Moritz. Only one small Swiss village that has been, for one hundred years, the premier winter playground for the regal and the rich.

Here, in the nineteenth century, bearded Czars raced their prized stallions across the frozen lakes. Wars were planned and treaties contemplated, as the royal families of Europe sat in mud baths and soaked in the warm mineral springs.

Kings and Queens still come to St. Moritz. And now the world's best skiers arrive to test their skills. They ski in the morning, slalom in the afternoon, and raise their glasses in celebration late into the night.

And so, through the years, only St. Moritz is St. Moritz. A traditional gathering place for people of talent and wealth; a sparkling one-of-a-kind creation in a winter world.

Like St. Moritz, Seagram's V.O. Canadian is also a one-of-a-kind creation. Through the years, V.O. has stood apart as a whisky uncompromising in quality, with a tradition of craftsmanship that has made it The First Canadian in smoothness. The First Canadian in lightness. And The First Canadian in popularity throughout the world.

Only St. Moritz is St. Moritz. Only V.O. is V.O. All the others come after.

Seagram's V.O.
The First Canadian.

CANADIAN WHISKY—A BLEND OF SELECTED WHISKIES. 6 YEARS OLD. 86.8 PROOF. SEAGRAM DISTILLERS CO., N.Y.C.

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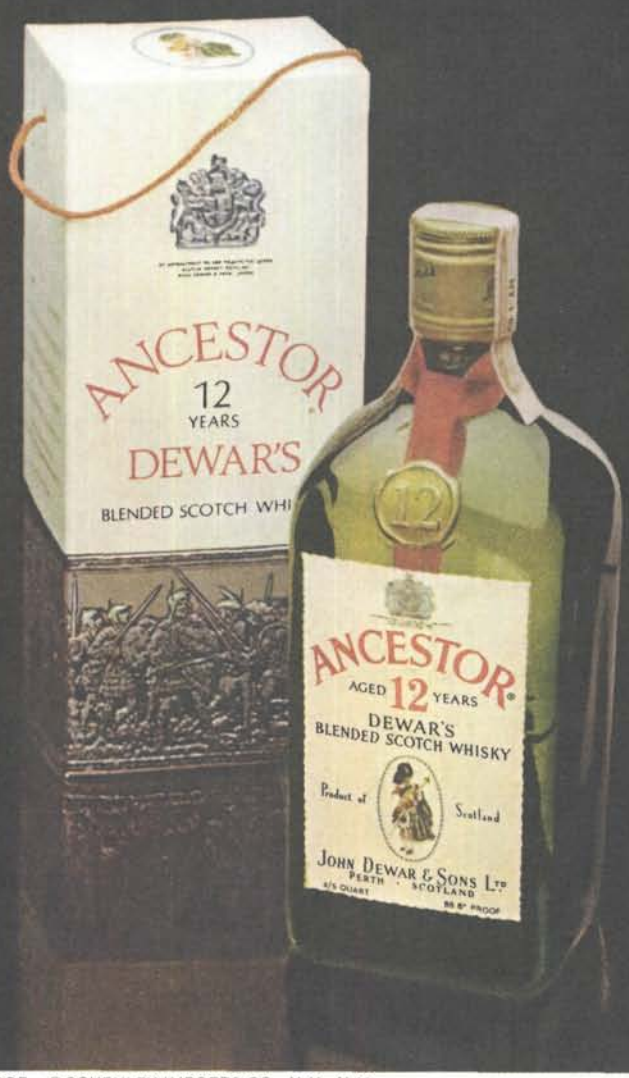
"We rich men count our happiness to lie in the little superfluities not in necessities."

–Quoted by Plutarch, AD 46-120

The truly rich man isn't the man with the most money. He's the man who enjoys those delightful superfluities of life...a custom-made putter, two seats on the aisle on opening night, an excellent Scotch whisky. Like Ancestor. Twelve years old. A gentle-spoken whisky, but brave at heart. Like all the little superfluities, it gives a lot of pleasure.



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